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THE

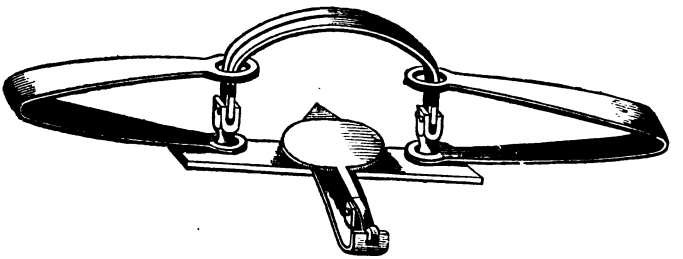
TRAPPER'S GUIDE:

A Manual of Instructions for Capturing all kinds of Fur-bearing Animals, and Curing their Skins; with Observations on the Fur Trade, Hints on Life in the Woods, and Narratives of Trapping and Hunting Excursions:

BY S. NEWHOUSE,

AND

OTHER TRAPPERS AND SPORTSMEN.



TO WHICH IS ADDED

A History and Description of the "Newhouse Trap," with Testimonials of Trappers and Trap-dealers as to its Merits.

EDITED BY J. H. NOYES.

PUBLISHED BY THE ONEIDA COMMUNITY.

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE CIRCULAR,
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INTRODUCTION.

BY THE EDITOR.

THIS book was not originally designed for amateur sportsmen or for the reading public generally, but for practical workingmen who make or propose to make trapping a means of livelihood. The plan of it was suggested by a business-necessity in the following manner:

Mr. S. Newhouse, a member of the Oneida Community, having become widely known as the maker of an excellent kind of steel-traps, and it being generally understood that the practical perfection of his traps is owing to the wisdom in wood-craft which he gained in early life by actual experience in trapping, he has often been applied to by his customers and others for information in regard to the best methods of capturing various animals. The most convenient way to answer such applications seemed to be to put his wisdom in print, and let it go abroad with his traps. In preparing for publication the material furnished by Mr. Newhouse for this purpose, the editor found new facts, inquiries and written contributions relating to trapping and kindred pursuits, crowding upon him, till the original idea of a small technical pamphlet swelled to the dimensions of the present work. The objects which he has finally aimed at have been, on the one hand, to furnish all the information needed in order to qualify a mere novice in trapping to enter upon the business intelligently and successfully; and on the other, to make an interesting book for all lovers of wood-craft, and for the reading public at large.

The character of the work, however, will be found to be mainly in accordance with its original practical design; and it might properly be dedicated to poor men who are looking out for pleasant work and ways of making money; and especially to soldiers, now returning from the war, whose taste for adventure and outdoor life may find a better field in the wild woods, and in conquests of the lower animals, than in Mexican raids and fighting with their fellow-men.

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As honesty is always good policy, it is best also to confess here that the editor and publishers of this work are extensively engaged in the business of making steel-traps, and have an eye to their own interests, as well as to the interests of others in this effort to help the business of trapping.

And here perhaps is the place to say something of the mutual relations of the several trades immediately concerned in the subject of this book, and of their importance in the machinery of universal business.

CONNECTION OF TRAPPING WITH OTHER TRADES.

Trapping, in the business series, is the intermediate link between trap-making and the fur-trade. The trapper buys of the trap-maker and sells to the fur-dealer. The first furnishes him with weapons, and the second buys his spoils. Through the first, he is related to the manufacturers and merchants of iron and steel, who furnish materials for his traps, and to the hardware men who bring them to his door. Through the second, he connects with the fur-manufacturer, the hatter, and the clothes dealer, and sends supplies of comfort and luxury to the world of wealth and fashion.

Trapping and trap-making, are directly subservient to the fur-trade. They may be said to be branches of it, or even to be its foundations. The fur-business expands as they prosper, and, *vice versa*, they prosper as the fur-business expands. The trapper and trap-maker watch the prices of furs, as the sailor watches the winds and the currents. When furs are high, trapping becomes active, and the trap-maker has his hands full of business. When furs are low, trapping declines, and the trap-maker has to dismiss his workmen.

The importance of the subservient trades, trapping and trap-making, can best be judged by looking at the statistics of the great fur-market for which they work. The fur-trade, every body knows, is an immense business. The making of the weapons and the fighting may be out of sight, but the spoils of the war are seen by all. Many a colossal fortune, like John Jacob Astor's, has been founded on peltry; and many a frontier city, like St. Paul's, has been built up by the traffic that originates in the enterprise of the trapper and trap-maker.

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OBSERVATIONS ON THE FUR-TRADE.

The following statements are made on the authority of members of large fur-dealing firms in the city of New York.

The yearly production of raw furs in the whole world is worth from seventeen to twenty millions of dollars, and the whole amount of the fur-trade, including manufactured goods, reaches a value of not less than one hundred millions.

The whole number of muskrat skins alone, taken annually, is estimated at five or six millions; of which three millions are used in Germany.

Raw furs are divided by American dealers into two classes, viz., *shipping* furs, i. e. furs that are to be sent abroad; and *home* furs, or furs for use in this country. The leading articles among shipping furs are the Silver, Red and Cross Fox, Raccoon, Fisher, Wildcat and Skunk. Among home firs are the Mink, Opossom, House Cat, Wolf and Marten. The Muskrat is classified under both heads.

Prices for shipping furs are regulated by the foreign demand.

The great fur-marts in Europe, are London, Leipsic, and Novgorod. At these points, semi-annual sales, (or fairs as they are termed), take place. The spring sales are most important. Here the representatives of the leading fur-houses from all parts of Europe meet to make their purchases during the months of March, April and May.

The fur-trade of Leipsic is estimated at six and a half millions of dollars annually.

Raccoon fur is the great staple for Russia; Red Fox for Turkey and the oriental countries; Skunk for Poland and the adjacent provinces; Muskrat for Germany, France and England.

New York is the great fur-mart in this country, and is the main depot of the shipping trade. There are no organized fur-companies at the present time. The business is carried on by private firms of large means and long experience. The New York Directory gives the names of more than one hundred furriers and fur-merchants, thirty of whom are wholesale dealers.

The leading fashionable fur for this country is the Mink; but the furs that are within the reach of the masses, and most worn, are the Muskrat and the Opossum.

The wearing of furs in this country is very little affected by

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climate, but is regulated almost entirely by *fashion*. In Europe, on the other hand, the state of the elements determines the extent of the call for furs as articles of clothing. Hence, notwithstanding the winters on both continents are growing milder, the demand for furs is continually increasing in this country, while in Europe it is falling off.

The more thickly settled parts of the United States show a large decrease in the "catch" of furs; but new territories are continually opening to the trapper; and though he moves from year to year farther north and west, the supply steadily keeps pace with the demand.

SEASON FOR TRAPPING.

All furs are best in winter; but trapping may be carried on to advantage for at least six months in the year, i. e. any time between the last of September and the first of April. There is a period in the warm season, say from the first of May to the first of August, when trapping is out of the question, as furs are worthless. The most trapping is done late in the fall and early in the spring.

The reason why furs become worthless in summer, is, that all fur-bearing animals shed their coats, or at least lose the finest and thickest part of their fur as warm weather approaches; and have a new growth of it in the fall to protect them in winter. This whole process is indicated in the case of the muskrat, and some other animals, by the color of the inside part of the skin. As summer approaches, it becomes brown and dark. That is a sign that the best fur is gone. Afterwards it grows light-colored, and in winter when the fur is in the best condition it is altogether white.

PRICES OF FURS.

The following is a price-list issued by a leading New-York fur-house on the 5th of May, 1865. Its figures are said by good judges to be much below present rates; but it is worth reading for the information it gives in regard to the varieties of animals whose skins enter into the fur-trade, and the localities where they are taken.

SILVER FOX,.....	according to size and color,	from	$20.00 to	$50.00
OTTER, Northern & Eastern, & North Western	do	"	7.00 to	8.00
" Pennsylvania, N. Jersey, Ohio & Western	do	"	5.00 to	6.00

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OTTER, Ky., Md., Va., Kansas & vicinity, according to size and color,	from	$ 4.00	to	$ 5.00
" North and South Carolina, & Georgia,	do	" 3.00	to	4.00
FISHER, Northern and Eastern,	do	" 6.00	to	8.00
" Penn., Ohio, and Southern,	do	" 4.00	to	5.00
BEAR, Northern,	do	" 10.00	to	15.00
" Southern,	do	" 5.00	to	8.00
MARTEN, States,	do	" 3.00	to	3.50
WOLF SKINS, Mountain Skins, large		" 3.00	to	3.50
" " Prairie,		" 1.00	to	1.50
CROSS FOX, Northern and Eastern, according to size and color,		" 6.00	to	8.00
" Penn., New Jersey and Ohio,	do	" 4.00	to	5.00
RED FOX, Northern and Eastern,	do	" 2.50	to	3.00
" South Penn., N. Jersey & North Ohio,	do	" 1.75	to	2.25
" Southern and Western,	do	" 1.00	to	1.50
GRAY FOX, Northern and Eastern,	do	" 0.90	to	1.00
" Southern and Western,	do	" 0.60	to	0.75
BEAVER, Northern per lb.	do	" 3.00	to	3.50
" Southern and ordinary, per lb., pale		" 1.50	to	2.00
HOUSE CAT, ordinary,		" 0.12	to	0.15
" Black furred,		" 0.25	to	0.30
BADGER,		" 0.75	to	1.00
LYNX, according to size,		" 3.50	to	4.00
MINK, New York, New England and Minnesota, according to size and color,		" 6.00	to	6.50
" N. J., Penn., O., Mich., Ind., Wis. & Iowa,	do	" 4.50	to	5.50
" Md., Va., Ky., Mo., Ills., So. Iowa & Kansas,	do	" 3.00	to	4.00
" N. Carolina, Tennessee, and all Southern,	do	" 1.50	to	2.00
WILD CAT, Northern and Eastern States, cased,	do	" 0.75	to	1.00
" Southern and Western,	do	" 0.50	to	0.60
RACCOON, Mich., N. Ind., Indian handled, dark,	do	" 0.80	to	0.90
" No. Ohio, Ill., Iowa, Wis., and Minn.,	do	" 0.70	to	0.75
" N. York, and E. States and N. Penn.,	do	" 0.50	to	0.60
" N. J., S. Penn., Ind., Ill., Mo., & Kan.,	do	" 0.40	to	0.45
" Md., Va., Kentucky and Arkansas,	do	" 0.30	to	0.35
" North Carolina and Tennessee,	do	" 0.20	to	0.25
" S. Carolina, Ga., Florida and Ala.,	do	" 0.10	to	0.15
MUSKRAT, Northern N. Y. and Eastern,	Spring	" 0.28	to	0.30
" Western, including Pa. and Ohio,	"	" 0.24	to	0.25
" Northern, Eastern and Western,	Winter	" 0.18	to	0.22
" S'thern, prime, and N'thern,	Fall Average	" 0.15	to	0.16
OPOSSUM, Northern	Cased	" 0.10	to	0.13
" Southern and open Northern,		" 0.06	to	0.08
RABBITS,	Prime. Cased	" 0.04	to	0.05
SKUNKS, prime black	Cased	" 0.80	to	0.90
" white and black, striped		" 0.25	to	0.30
" out seasoned and very white,		" 0.05	to	0.06
KIOTA, prairie Kitt Fox,		" 0.50	to	0,75

Mr. Newhouse gives the following list, as an approximation to the general range of prices for a few years past, according to his remembrance.

Otter,	from	$ 6.00	to $10.50	Badger,	from	$ .75	to $ 1.25
Fisher,	"	6.00	" 10.00	Mink,	"	6.00	" 10.00
Bear,	"	5.00	" 10.00	Wild Cat,	"	.75	" 1.00
Marten,	"	1.50	" 5.00	Raccoon,	"	.50	" 1.50
Wolf,	"	1.00	" 3.00	Muskrat,	"	.20	" .35
Red Fox,	"	1.50	" 3.25	Skunk,	"	.50	" 1.00
Silver Fox,	"	10.00	" 30.00	Beaver, per lb.,	"	1.50	" 3.50
Black Fox,	"	30.00	" 150.00				

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THE TRAPPER'S ART.

BY S. NEWHOUSE.

I. PRELIMINARIES.

WILD animals are taken for various reasons besides the value of their furs. Some are sought as articles of food; others are destroyed as nuisances. In these cases the methods of capture are not essential. Animals that are valuable for food, may be run down by dogs or shot by the rifle or fowling-piece; and nuisances may be destroyed by poison. But for the capture of fur-bearing animals there is but one profitable method, viz., by *steel-traps.* Other methods were much used by trappers in old times before good steel-traps were made; and are still used in semi-barbarous countries, where steel-traps are unknown, or cannot be had. I will briefly mention two or three of these methods, and the objections to them; and after that give my views of the true method.

THE DEAD-FALL.

This is a clumsy contrivance for killing animals, which can be made anywhere, with an ax and hard work. It consists of two large poles, (or logs when set for bears and other large animals), placed one over the other and kept in place by four stakes, two on each side. The upper pole is raised at one end high enough above the lower to admit the entrance of the animal, and is kept up in that position by the familiar contrivance of the stick and spindle, or "figure four." A tight pen is made with sticks, brush, &c., on one side of this structure, at right angles to it, and the spindle projects obliquely into this pen; so that the bait attached to it is about eight inches beyond the side of the poles. The animal, to reach the bait, has to place his body between the poles and at right angles to them; and on pulling the spindle, springs the "figure four" and is crushed.

The objections to this contrivance are, first, that it takes a long time to make and set one, thus wasting the trapper's time; and

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second, that animals caught in this way lie exposed to the voracity of other animals, and are often torn in pieces before the trapper reaches them, which is not the case when animals are caught in steel-traps, properly set, as will be shown hereafter. Moreover, the dead-fall is very uncertain in its operation; and woodsmen who have become accustomed to good steel-traps, call it a "miserable toggle," not worth baiting when they find one ready made in the woods.

POISONING.

Animals are sometimes poisoned with strychnine. I have myself taken foxes in this way. I used about as much strychnine as would be contained in a percussion-cap, inclosed firmly in a piece of tallow as large as a chestnut, and left on the foxes' bed. After swallowing such a dose, they rarely go more than three or four rods before they drop dead.

The objection to this method is, that it spoils the skin. Furriers say that the poison spreads through the whole body of the animal, and kills the life of the fur, so that they cannot work it profitably. Poison is used very little by woodsmen at the present time.

SHOOTING.

This method of killing fur-bearing animals, is still quite prevalent in some countries. It is said to be the principal method in Russia, and is not altogether disused in this country. But it is a very wasteful method. Fur dealers and manufacturers consider skins that have been shot, especially by the fowling-piece, as hardly worth working. The holes that are made in the skin, whether by shot or bullets, are but a small part of the damage done to it. The shot that enter the body of the animal directly are almost harmless compared with those that strike it obliquely, or graze across it. Every one of these grazing shot, however small, cuts a furrow in the fur, sometimes several inches in length, shaving every hair in its course as with a razor. Slits in the skin have to be cut out to the full extent of these furrows, and closed up or new pieces fitted in. Hence when the hunter brings his stock of skins to the experienced furrier, he is generally saluted with the question, "Are your furs shot, or trapped?" and if he has to answer, "They were shot," he finds the dealer quite indif-

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ferent about buying them at any price. The introduction of good steel-traps into Russia would probably add millions of dollars annually to the value of the furs taken in that vast territory.

STEEL-TRAPS.

The experience of modern trappers, after trying all other methods, and all kinds of new-fashioned traps, has led them almost unanimously to the conclusion, that the old steel-trap, when scientifically and faithfully made, is the surest and most economical means of capturing fur-bearing animals. Some of the reasons for this conclusion are these: steel-traps can be easily transported; can be set in all situations on land or under water; can be easily concealed; can be tended in great numbers; can be combined by means of chain and ring with a variety of contrivances (hereafter to be described) for securing the animal caught, from destruction by other animals, and from escape by self-amputation; and above all, the steel-trap *does no injury to the fur.*

And here I think it my duty as a true friend to the trapper, to give him the benefit of my experience and study in regard to the form and qualities of a good steel-trap, that he may be able to judge and choose the weapons of his warfare intelligently.

REQUISITES OF A GOOD TRAP.

The various sizes of traps adapted to different kinds of animals, of course require different forms and qualities, which will be spoken of in the proper places hereafter. But several of the essentials are the same in all good traps.

1. *The jaws should not be too thin and sharp-cornered.* Jaws made of sheet-iron, or of plates approaching to the thinness of sheet-iron, and having sharp edges, or, still worse, sharp teeth, will almost cut off an animal's leg by the bare force of the spring, if it is a strong one, and will always materially help an animal to gnaw or twist off his leg. And it should be known, that nearly all animals that escape get away by self-amputation.

2. *The pan should not be too large.* A large pan, filling nearly the whole space of the open jaws, may seem to increase the chances of an animal's being caught, by giving him more surface to tread upon in springing the trap. But there is a mistake in this. When an animal springs a trap by treading on the outer

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part of a large pan, his foot is near the jaw, and instead of being caught, is liable to be thrown out by the stroke of the jaw.—Whereas, when he treads on a small pan, his foot is nearly in the centre of the sweep of the jaws, and he is very sure to be seized far enough up on the leg to be well secured.

3. *The spring should be strong enough.* This is a matter for good judgment, that cannot well be explained here; but it is safe to say that very many traps, in consequence of false economy on the part of manufacturers, are furnished with springs that are too weak to secure strong and desperate animals.

4. *The spring should be tempered scientifically.* Many springs, in consequence of being badly tempered, "give down" in a little while, i. e., lose their elasticity and close together; and others break in cold weather, or when set under water.

5. *The spring should be correctly proportioned and tapered.* Without this, the stronger it is and the better it is tempered, the more liable it is to break.

6. *The form of the jaws must be such as to give the bow of the spring a proper inclined plane to work upon.* In many traps, the angle at the shoulder of the jaws is so great, that even a strong spring will not hold a desperate animal.

7. *The adjustment of the spring and jaws must be such, that the jaws will lie flat when open.* Otherwise the trap cannot well be secreted.

8. *The jaws must work easily in the posts.* For want of attention to this, many traps will not spring.

9. *The adjustment of all the parts and their actual working, should be so inspected and tested that every trap shall be ready for use—"sure to go," and sure to hold.* In consequence of the unfaithfulness of trap-makers in inspecting and testing their work, many a trapper, after lugging a weary back-load of traps into the wilderness, finds that a large portion of them have some "hitch," which either makes them worthless or requires a tug at tinkering before they can be made to do the poorest service.

German and English traps are almost universally liable to criticism on all the points above mentioned; and most of the traps made in this country fail in one or more of them.

In addition to the foregoing requisites, every trap should be furnished with a stout chain, faithfully welded, with ring and

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swivel. And let the trapper look well to the condition of the swivel. Many of the malleable-iron swivels used by second-rate careless manufacturers, will not turn at all; and many an animal escapes by twisting off chains that have these dead swivels.

In treating of the capture of particular animals, I shall have occasion to refer frequently to several contrivances that are used in connection with the fastening of steel-traps. I will therefore describe those contrivances here, once for all.

THE SPRING-POLE.

In taking several kinds of land animals, such as the marten and fisher, it is necessary to provide against their being devoured by other animals before the trapper reaches them, and also against their gnawing off their own legs, or breaking the chain of the trap by violence. The contrivance used for this purpose is called a *spring-pole*, and is prepared in the following manner: If a small tree can be found standing near the place where your trap is set, trim it and use it for a spring as it stands. If not, cut a pole of sufficient size and drive it firmly into the ground; bend down the top; fasten the chain-ring to it; and fasten the pole in its bent position by a notch or hook on a small tree or a stick driven into the ground. When the animal is caught, his struggles, pulling on the chain, unhook the pole, which flying up with a jerk, carries him into the air, out of the reach of prowlers, and in a condition that disables his attempts to escape by self-amputation or other violence. The size of the pole must be proportioned to the weight of the game which it is expected to lift.

THE SLIDING-POLE.

Animals of aquatic habits, when caught in traps, invariably plunge at once into deep water: and it is the object of the trapper, availing himself of this plunge, to drown his captive as soon as possible, in order to stop his violence, and keep him out of the reach of other animals. The weight of the trap and chain is usually sufficient for this purpose in the case of the muskrat. But in taking the larger amphibious animals, such as the beaver, the trapper uses a contrivance which is called the *sliding-pole*. It is prepared in the following manner: Cut a pole ten or twelve feet long, leaving branches enough on the small end to prevent the

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ring of the chain from slipping off. Place this pole near where you set your trap, in an inclined position, with its small end reaching into the deepest part of the stream, and its large end secured at the bank by a hook driven into the ground. Slip the ring of your chain on to this, and see that it is free to traverse down the length of the pole. When the animal is taken, it plunges desperately into the region toward which the pole leads. The ring slides down to the end of the pole at the bottom of the stream, and, with a short chain, prevents the victim from rising to the surface or returning to the shore.

THE CLOG.

Some powerful and violent animals, if caught in a trap that is staked fast, will pull their legs off, or beat the trap in pieces; but if allowed to drag the trap about with a moderate weight attached, will behave more gently, or at least will not be able to get loose for want of purchase. The weight used in such cases is called a *clog*. It is usually a pole or stick of wood, of a size suited to the ring of the trap-chain, and to the size of the game. As the object of it is to encumber the animal, but not to hold it fast, the chain should be attached to it near one of its ends, so that it will not be likely to get fast among the rocks and bushes for a considerable time. The usual way is to slip the ring over the large end of the pole and fasten it with a wedge.

RULE FOR BAITING.

There is one general principle in regard to *baiting* animals that may as well be recorded and explained here, as it is applicable to all cases. It is this: *Never put bait on the pan of a trap.* The old-fashioned traps were always made with holes in the pan for strings to tie on bait; and many if not most novices in trapping imagine that the true way is to attract the animal's *nose* straight to the centre of action, by piling bait on the pan, as though it were expected to catch him by the head. The truth however is that animals are very rarely taken by the head or the body, but almost always by a leg. When an animal pulls at a bait on the pan of a trap, he is not likely even to spring the trap, for he lifts in the wrong direction; and if he does spring it, the position of his head is such, especially if the bait is high on the pan, that he is pretty sure to give the jaws the slip. Besides, bait on the pan

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calls the attention of the wary animal to the trap; whereas he ought to be wholly diverted from it, and all signs of it obliterated. Bait should always be placed so that the animal in attempting to take it shall put a *foot* on the pan. This can be done in several ways, all of which will be explained in detail hereafter. But this general direction may be given for all cases that are not otherwise prescribed for: *Place the bait either on a stick above the trap, or in an enclosure so arranged that the animal will have to step over the trap to reach it.*

PROPER OUTFIT OF TRAPS.

In preparing for a trapping excursion, the novice naturally inquires how many traps he shall take along. If the question were simply how many traps he could *tend*, I should probably say from one to two hundred. But the main question really is—how many traps can he *carry?* If he is going on a marsh, lake, or river, where he can travel by boat, or into a region where he can carry his baggage by horse and wagon, he may take along all the traps he can tend, the more the better. But if he is going by overland routes into the rough woody regions where most game abounds, and consequently must carry his baggage on his back, he will probably find that seventy-five small traps, or an equivalent weight of large and small ones, will be as much as he will like to carry.

PROFITS OF TRAPPING.

The provident candidate for wood-craft, will want to know what wages a man is likely to make at trapping. I will give him a few instances of what has been done, and then he may judge for himself. I have cleared seven dollars per day for a five weeks trip. A man that once trapped with me, caught fifty-three musk-rats in one night, which at present prices would be worth $15.90. I know several men in Jefferson county, (N. Y.) who paid for good farms with furs that they caught within eight miles of home. It is not uncommon for two men to make five hundred dollars in a trapping season. But too much reliance must not be placed on these specimens. Good weather, good trapping-grounds, good traps, good judgment, and good luck, must be combined, to secure good profits.

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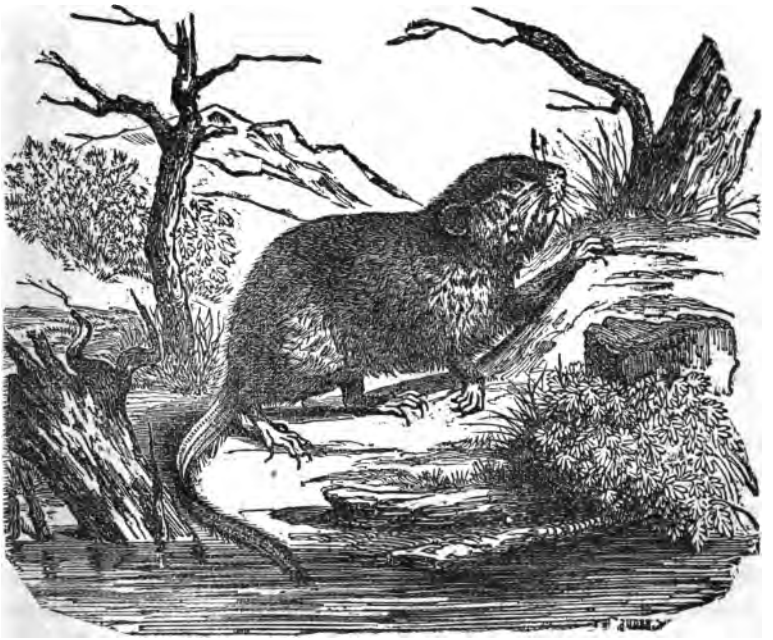
II. CAPTURE OF ANIMALS.

It will be useful to the inexperienced trapper to have some account of the appearance and habits of each animal in connection with instructions for capturing it. Such information is often indispensable as the basis of plans and contrivances for capture. But I shall confine myself to brief descriptions in common language, not attempting any thing scientific; and I shall avail myself of the help of books where my own observation and experience fail.

[N. B. Our wood-cuts represent the shape and general appearance of the different animals, but not in all cases their relative size.—Editor.]



THE MUSKRAT.

This is an animal of amphibious habits. Its head and body are from thirteen to fifteen inches in length. The tail is nine or

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ten inches long, two-edged, and for two thirds its length rudder-shaped, and covered with scales and thin short hair, the edges being heavily fringed. The hind feet are slightly webbed; so that it can "feather the oar," as boatmen say, when they are brought forward in swimming. The color is brown above and ashy beneath. Muskrats are nocturnal in their habits; but are frequently seen swimming and feeding in the day time. They are excellent swimmers, and can go from ten to fifteen rods under water without breathing. Their natural food is grass and roots; but they will eat clams, mussels, flesh, corn, oats, wheat, apples and many other vegetables. In open winters they sometimes find their way into farmers' cellars through drains, and make free with whatever they find in store. They thrive best in sluggish streams or ponds bordered with grass and flags. The roots of these plants are their chief support, and from the tops they construct their abodes. These structures are dome-shaped, and rise sometimes to the height of five or six feet. The entrances are at the bottom, under water; so that the inside of the houses are not exposed to the open air. The muskrats live in them in winter, gathering into families of from six to ten members. Hundreds of these dwellings can be counted from a single point in many large marshes.

Muskrats have a curious method of traveling long distances under the ice. In their winter excursions to their feeding grounds, which are frequently at great distances from their abodes, they take in breath at starting and remain under the water as long as they can. Then they rise up to the ice, and breathe out the air in their lungs, which remains in bubbles against the lower surface of the ice. They wait till this air recovers oxygen from the water and the ice, and then take it in again and go on till the operation has to be repeated. In this way they can travel almost any distance, and live any length of time under the ice.

The hunter sometimes takes advantage of this habit of the muskrat, in the following manner: When the marshes and ponds where muskrats abound are first frozen over and the ice is thin and clear, on striking into their houses with his hatchet for the purpose of setting his traps, he frequently sees a whole family plunge into the water and swim away under the ice. Following one of them for some distance, he sees him come up to renew his breath in the

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manner above described. After the animal has breathed against the ice, and before he has had time to take his bubble in again, the hunter strikes with his hatchet directly over him and drives him away from his breath. In this case he drowns in swimming a few rods, and the hunter, cutting a hole in the ice, takes him out. Mink, otter, and beaver travel under the ice in the same way; and hunters have frequently told me of taking otter in the manner I have described, when these animals visit the houses of the muskrat for prey.

In summer, muskrats live mostly in banks and in hollow trees that stand near a stream; and sometimes for want of suitable marshes and ponds, they remain in the banks and trees through the winter. They are very prolific, bringing forth from six to nine at a birth, and three times a year. The first kittens also have one litter, which attain to about the size of house-rats in September. They have many enemies, such as the fox, wolf, lynx, otter, mink, and owl. They are found from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the Rio Grande to the Arctic Regions. But they do not inhabit the alluvial lands of Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Florida, though in other regions they live much further south.

The modes of capturing the muskrat are various. One of them we have already seen. Another is by spearing, of which a fine example will be given in a subsequent article by Mr. Thacker. These methods are good at certain seasons and in certain conditions of the ice, &c.; but for general service there is no means of capture so reliable as the steel-trap. Traps should be set in the principal feeding places, playgrounds, and holes of the muskrat, and generally about two inches under water. Bait is not necessary except when game is scarce and its signs not fresh. In that case you may bait with apples, parsnips, carrots, artichokes, white flag-roots, or even the flesh of the muskrat. The musk of this animal will sometimes draw effectually at long distances. The bait should be fastened to the end of a stick, and stuck over the trap about eight inches high, and in such a position that the animal will have to pass over the trap to take the bait. Care should be taken to fasten the trap to a stake in such a position that the chain will lead the captive into deep water and drown him. If he is allowed to entangle himself or by any means to get ashore, he will be very likely to gnaw or twist off a leg and get away.

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THE MINK.

This very valuable fur-bearing animal is found in the northern parts of America, Europe and Asia. It is carnivorous in its habits, and belongs to the weasel family, resembling the ferret, ermine, &c. It is not amphibious like the muskrat; and yet it lives on the banks of streams and gets much of its food from them. It is of a dark-brown color: has short legs, a long body and neck, and a bushy tail. The common eastern variety is from thirteen to eighteen inches in length, with a tail of eight or ten inches. In some of the western and southern states there is a variety that is much larger, with coarser fur of a lighter color, and much less valuable than that of the eastern variety. Mink are ramblers in their habits, except in the breeding season. They feed on fish, frogs, snakes, birds, mice and muskrats: and the hen-roost frequently suffers from their depredations. They are very fond of speckled trout, and pretty sure to find out the streams where those fish abound. Their breeding season commences about the last of April, and the females bring forth from four to six at a litter. The young are hid by the mother till they attain nearly half their growth, as the males of this species, as well as of the marten, fisher, weasel, panther and most carniverous animals, destroy their young when they can find them.

Mink can be taken in steel-traps, either on land or in the water. Experts generally prefer to take them on land. The trap should be set near the bank of a stream. If one of their holes cannot be found, make a hole by the side of a root or a stump, or any where in the ground. Three sides of the cavity should be barricaded with stones, bark, or rotten wood, and the trap set at the entrance. The bait may be fish, birds, or the flesh of the muskrat, cut in small pieces; and it should be put into the cavity be-

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yond the trap, so that the animal will have to step over the trap in taking the bait. The trap should be concealed by a covering of leaves, rotten vegetation, or what is better, the feathers of some bird. In very cold weather the bait should be smoked to give it a stronger smell.

Mink can be attracted long distances by a scent that is prepared from the decomposition of eels, trout, or even minnows. These fishes are cut in small pieces, and put into a loosely-corked bottle, which is allowed to hang in the sunshine for two or three weeks in summer; when a sort of oil is formed which emits a very strong odor. A few drops of this oil on the bait, or even on a stick without bait, will draw mink very effectually.

The chain of the trap should be fastened to a spring-pole, strong enough to lift the animal, when caught, out of the reach of the fisher, fox, and other depredators; or if the trap is set near deep water, it may be attached to a sliding-pole, which will secure the game by drowning it. Both of these devices are fully described on page 16.

THE MARTEN.

This is a carnivorous animal of the weasel family, about as large as the mink, and differing but little from it in form, save that its feet are larger and hairy to the toes, and its tail is somewhat larger and of dark-brown or black color. The fur of the marten is generally of a yellowish brown, but differs in color according to season, latitude and locality. The Hudson Bay and Lake Superior marten is very dark-colored, and commands the highest price. The range of these animals extends from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Their haunts are the thick dark woods in cold snowy regions, and they generally live in hollow trees. They feed upon rabbits, birds, squirrels, mice and other small animals, and are fond of beech-nuts. They are active climbers, and their small size enables them to pursue the gray squirrel and capture him in his hiding-places. They are not strictly nocturnal in their habits, as some have asserted, being frequently seen and killed in the day time. Their breeding season commences in March or

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April, and they have from three to five young at a time, which are hidden from the males during infancy.

Martens are taken in steel-traps by the same method as the mink. (See page 22.) In winter, however, the traps should be set in hollow logs or trees, secured from the covering of snows and concealed by the feathers of a bird.

There is an animal inhabiting the frozen regions of European and Asiatic Russia, called the sable, which very much resembles the marten, and is supposed by many to be the same species. Its fur, however, in consequence of difference of climate, is vastly superior to that of the American marten, single skins sometimes selling for sixty dollars. The color of the sable is subject to more change than that of the common marten, being in summer light-yellow or brown, and in winter dark-brown or almost black. The habits, time and manner of breeding, and mode of capture of this variety are the same as those of the marten.

THE FISHER.

This is another carnivorous animal of the weasel tribe, resembling the marten in habits and general appearance, though much larger. The length of its body is about two feet, and it has a black bushy tail of about fifteen inches. Its head is rather more pointed than that of the marten; its ears are rounded; its feet are large, short and stout, armed with sharp claws, and thickly covered with fur and hair. The color of its fur is dark-brown or black. It inhabits the cold snowy regions of the North, and is generally nocturnal in its habits. It preys on hares, raccoons, squirrels, partridges, mice and small birds; and has been seen watching for fish, lying flat on a log that crosses a stream, with head inclined downward ready for a plunge. Its breeding season commences in March or April, and from two to four young are brought forth at a time. The young are hidden from the males in hollow trees at a considerable distance from the

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ground, until they are large enough to take care of themselves.

These animals are taken in steel-traps by the same method as the mink and marten. (See page 22.) The barricade around the trap, however, should be stronger, and the entrance larger. The trap in all cases should be fastened to a spring-pole of sufficient strength to lift the animal clear from the ground, as it is pretty sure to gnaw off a leg or the pole, if left where it can touch the ground. (See page 16.)

The fisher frequently annoys the trapper by robbing his marten-traps of their bait. The structure for taking the marten being too small to admit the entrance of the fisher, he breaks in from behind, and thus secures the bait without getting into the trap.

THE OTTER.

This animal is found in all parts of the world. It is carnivorous, and belongs to the weasel family. It is aquatic in its habits, living and getting its living in streams where fish abound. It is of a dark-brown color on the back, and lighter below. Its ears are small and far apart; head broad and flat above; body thick and long; feet hard, short, and webbed; tail long, round, and toward the tip depressed, and flat beneath. Its legs are apparently set upon the sides of its body, which gives it an awkward waddling appearance when traveling on land. Otters frequently measure three feet and a half from the nose to the tip of the tail, and weigh from fifteen to twenty-five pounds.

They are excellent swimmers and divers, and can remain a long time under water. Their activity in this element enables them to take fish with the greatest ease. They even destroy fish in great numbers for the mere pleasure of killing them, when they do not require them for food. The speckled trout is their favorite game, and they frequent the clear rapid streams in search of this dainty. They are sometimes tamed and taught to drive fish into the net, and even to catch them and bring them ashore for their master.

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They burrow in the banks of streams, lining their nests with leaves and grass. The entrances to their abodes are under water. Their breeding season is in April or May, and the females bring forth from two to four young at a time.

They are gregarious and rambling in their habits, and have a singular practice of sliding down wet and muddy banks and icy slopes, apparently for sport. The places where they play in this manner are called "slides," and are found at intervals on all the streams and routes that they haunt. They are frequently seen in troops of four or six wandering up or down a stream, and traveling for miles over hills and through swamps, from one stream or lake to the nearest point of another. In their rambles they make it a point to have a game of antics at every "slide" on their route. They are gone from home on excursions of this kind generally a week or ten days, and the trapper who knows their habits, is not disappointed if he does not catch them on their home-grounds the first or second night, but waits patiently for their return from their circuit.

I have shown on page 13 that the shooting of fur-bearing animals is a wasteful practice, because it injures the fur. It is especially wasteful in the case of aquatic animals, because they sink when shot in the water and generally are lost. Very few otter are saved that are killed in this way.

Some trappers take the otter with what is called a "claw-trap" —an instrument that springs like a common steel-trap, but strikes and kills the animal with claws or hooks. This trap should be set on the steepest "slides," about at the middle of the descent and in the centre of the path, so that the otter, in his game of sliding down hill shall spring the hooks and be struck in the centre of the body or breast. The trap must be carefully secreted.

But the common steel-trap is undoubtedly the best means of taking the otter; and this instrument should be placed not on the middle of the "slide," but at the highest point of it, where the animal starts for his descent. The reason is that at that point he is likely to be in a walking position, so as to be caught by his legs; whereas when he is on his way down the hill, he is sliding and rolling with his fore legs under his body, and is very apt to spring the trap with his breast or belly so as not to be seized by the jaws. Also the trap should be placed a little on one side of

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the central path of the "slide," because the legs of the otter stand out on the sides of his body and are so far apart, that he is likely to put down his feet on each side of the trap and not in it, if it is set in the middle of the path. A small cavity should be made in the earth with a knife or hatchet, and the trap inserted so as to be nearly level with the path. Under the pan and around the jaws and springs there should be a light packing of leaves and moss. The top covering should be dry leaves of some evergreen or rotten wood broken very fine and brushed off smooth so as to appear natural. The trap should be fastened in the following manner: Cut a small tree of the size of the chain-ring and set it upright near enough to the path to assist in guiding the animal into the trap, supporting it in that position and securing the trap and game by withing or tying the top to another tree. The ring should be slipped on the butt and fastened by a wedge. After the trap is thus properly set, covered and fastened, a dry bush may be carelessly dropped in such a position as to turn the otter in the right direction toward the trap. The whole apparatus should then be thoroughly drenched with water, which can be done by dipping an evergreen bough in the stream and sprinkling. Finally, perfume the place of the trap with a few drops of the fish-oil described on page 23. The musk of the otter, (which is an oil taken from two small glands, called oil-stones, lying next the skin on the belly of both sexes) may be added to complete the charm. The trapper, in his rounds of inspection, should be careful to keep at a proper distance from the trap while it is unsprung, so as not to leave any disturbing scent on the field of operations; for the otter's sense of smell is incredibly delicate.

The art of taking otter in the winter under the ice is not generally understood by trappers, and deserves an explanation.—These animals do not hybernate, but travel about in winter as well as in summer. In the coldest weather they keep their feeding holes in the ice open, and are frequently seen near the edges, playing, sliding, and catching fish. They can be taken by the following process: Ascertain the depth of water at one of these holes, and cut a pole, suitable to the ring of the chain, and long enough to rise some distance above the ice when the butt is driven into the bottom. The ring of the chain should be slipped on the butt before it is driven, and should be free to traverse the length

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of the pole, except that a twig should be left near the lower end to prevent it from slipping off when you come to raise the trap. Two branches should emerge from one place toward the upper end, and should be left three or four inches long. Drive the pole so that these branches will be about eight inches below the ice, and fill into the fork of the branches with evergreeens, so as to give the appearance of a bird's nest. Set your trap on this nest, and the otter, climbing over it to assist him in emerging from the water, will spring it and be taken. Then he will make a desperate plunge to the bottom of the stream, and the ring of the chain sliding down on the pole, he will be unable to rise again and will drown. In this way many can be taken successively in a single trap. They travel mostly under the ice in winter, and in their rounds visit all the feeding holes on their way; and are often taken in traps set as above directed, when the holes are entirely frozen over.

THE BEAVER.

This is an amphibious animal, belonging to the same family with the muskrat. Indeed these two species are so nearly alike that a beaver seems to be only a muskrat enormously enlarged. The body of the beaver is thick, heavy, and squat, about two feet and a half long, weighing when full-grown from sixty to eighty pounds. The tail is the most notable part of the animal. It measures from ten to twelve inches in length, and from three to four and a half inches in breadth. It is oval in shape, but flattened on the upper and under sides, and is covered with a species of hairy scales, which are set upon a thick dusky skin. It is believed by trappers who have diligently watched the ways of this animal that it uses its tail as a spade or trowel in working mud and sand. This member also answers the purpose of a prop, to help the animal stand erect while at work. It serves as both rudder and oar in swimming, being turned under the body at a right angle, and swung from side to side with great rapidity and power, the operation being like the sculling of a boat.

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Beavers are not gregarious in summer, but become so at the approach of winter, when they build their huts and dams and gather their stores of food. Their huts are built first, generally in September, and are much like those of the muskrat, but larger and stronger. They rise out of the water and have their entrances at the bottom. They are made to hold ten or twelve animals each. Some beavers live on the banks of large rivers and lakes, and having of course plenty of water, do not build dams, but have their holes in the banks, with their entrances under water and their huts in front of them. They are called bank beavers, though they differ in nothing from their dam-building brethren. Those that live on small streams, where there is not water enough to surround their huts and protect their stores from freezing in winter, build dams to raise the water and create ponds suitable for their purpose. They commence by cutting down with their teeth trees of all sizes, from those of ten inches in diameter to the smallest brushwood. These are cut into pieces suitable for transportation by a single animal, and then are conveyed to the place chosen for a dam, the beaver laying one paw over the timber, as he drags it along with his teeth. The smaller materials, such as mud, sticks and stones, are carried between one of the fore-paws and the chin. The dams are generally built with an angle or convex curve up stream, which strengthens them against the floods. They are frequently six or eight feet high, and from ten to thirty rods in length. The trees, resting on the bottom, are so mixed and filled in with mud, sticks, stones, leaves and grass, that very little water escapes, except by running over the top; and the height is so uniform that the water drips evenly from one end to the other. After the dams are built, but before they are frozen over, the beavers lay in their winter stores, which consist of the bark of the willow, aspen, poplar, birch and alder. They fell these trees with their teeth, cut them up into short sections, and sink them in the water near their huts. In the winter when their ponds are frozen over, they enter the water by the holes at the bottom of their huts, collect these sunken trees and take them to their dwellings, as they require them for food.

The breeding season of the beaver commences in April or May, and they have from two to four young ones at a birth. The young remain with their parents for three years. In the fourth year

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they start a new colony, and commence breeding, the parents assisting in building the new dam. This is probably the reason why so many dams are built one above another on the same stream. Several can frequently be seen from a single point, and they are generally so arranged that the water from one dam sets back to the next above.

Within a recent period beavers were abundant in all the northern, middle and western states of the Union, as the large number of their dams, and the beautiful "beaver meadows," caused by the filling up of their ponds with alluvial matter, sufficiently indicate. But they retire at the approach of man; and the gradual clearing up and cultivation of the soil has driven them nearly all from the country. In the upper and lower provinces of Canada, however, they are still found in abundance.

There are several methods of taking beaver in steel-traps. A few of the most successful I will endeavor to describe.

A full-grown family of beavers, as I have said before, consists of the parents, male and female, their three-year-old offspring, the two year olds, and the yearlings—four generations of four different sizes, occupying one hut, and doing business in one pond. When a trapper comes upon such a pond, or one that he has reason to believe is inhabited by a large number of beavers, his object should be to take them all: and in order to do this he must conduct his operations so that when one beaver is caught it will not have opportunity to alarm the rest; for otherwise the whole family may leave for parts unknown. His care should be directed therefore to two points, viz., first, to the setting of his traps in such a way as to take each beaver while alone; and, secondly, to arrangements for drowning them as speedily as possible after they are taken. To secure the first point, he should not set his traps very near the dwelling of the beavers, but should select places at some distance up the pond on some point or neck of land projecting into the stream, where the animals will pass and repass, but where each will be most likely to be alone. The trap should be set close to the shore, about three inches under water, and should be carefully secreted by a covering of some soft substance that will not interfere with its springing. For bait a small portion of beaver-castor (a milky secretion found in glands near the testicles of the male beaver) may be left on the bank near the trap. If the

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trapper's approach was made by land, all foot-prints should be erased by drenching with water. To secure the second point the chain of the trap should be attached to a *dry* sliding-pole, in the manner described on page 16, which will lead the captured beaver into deep water and drown him. The reason why the sliding-pole should be dry, is, that if it is green, the remaining beavers will be likely to gnaw it off and take it home with them, trap, beaver and all, for the sake of the bark.

Beavers are sometimes taken by breaking away their dam, two inches below the surface, in one or two places, and setting traps in the breaches. They keep sentinels to examine their dams every night, and the least break is soon detected and put under repair; so that with traps properly set, some of the beavers will be likely to be taken while at work at this business. But as the whole family is summoned out when a breach is considered dangerous, and as in any case several beavers are likely to be engaged in a work of repair, the capture of one is almost sure to frighten away the rest; for which reason this method of capture should be generally discarded as impolitic.

The surest way of taking beaver is by trapping in winter in the following manner. When their ponds are frozen over, make a hole in the ice about three feet across, near the shore and near a hut. Cut a tree of birch, poplar or alder, about two inches in diameter; press the top together and shove the whole under the ice in such a direction that the beavers will be likely to pass and repass it in going to and from their house. The butt of the tree should be fastened at the shore under the ice. Directly under the butt, about ten or twelve inches below, a platform should be prepared by driving stakes or by any other means that is convenient, on which the trap should be set. The chain ring should be attached as before to a *dry* sliding-pole. After the trap is set and secured, the hole in the ice should be filled up with snow and allowed to freeze. The beaver passing the newly cut tree and discovering its freshness, will proceed toward the butt for the purpose of securing the whole for food, and in gnawing it off near the shore over the trap, will be likely to be taken.

The beaver is said to renew its breath, when traveling under the ice, in the same manner as the muskrat; and of course might be caught at certain times in the way described on page 20—21.

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THE FOX.

This is a well known carnivorous animal of the dog or wolf family. It is said that there are fourteen well ascertained species of foxes: six of which are found in the United States. They are distributed through all latitudes, but are most abundant in the north. The different species closely resemble each other in size, form, habits and mode of capture, and differ only in their color and the quality of their furs; which vary in consequence of difference of species and climate, from the coarsest dog-fur to the finest sable. The American red fox is the most common, and in many parts of the United States is considered one of the worst robbers of the farmer's sheep-fold and hen-roost. Foxes feed upon partridges, small birds, rabbits, squirrels, muskrats, mice, fish, eggs, cheese, and are remarkably fond of grapes. When pressed with hunger, they accept reptiles and carrion. Their modes of securing their prey are various. They generally seize their victim by creeping stealthily within springing distance and pouncing on it like a cat; but they frequently pursue the rabbit and other game with the "long chase." Their senses of sight, smell and hearing are very acute, and their speed is great. They are cunning, and their tricks to escape their enemies and secure their prey are very remarkable. The length of the fox from the nose to the tip of the tail is about three feet, and its weight from fifteen to twenty-five pounds. The tail is large and bushy, and when wet retards their speed in running. Their breeding season is in February or March, and they bring forth from four to nine at a birth. They generally burrow and rear their young in the earth, but sometimes take up their abode in a hollow tree or log, or in a ledge of rocks.

Some of the most successful methods of catching the fox are the following:

To prevent the smell of iron from alarming the game, the trap should be thoroughly smeared with blood, which can be

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done by holding it under the neck of some bleeding animal and allowing it to dry. Or for the same purpose it may be heated and covered with bees-wax, which at the proper temperature will readily run all over the trap and chain. It should be set near the haunts of the fox. A bed of ashes, chaff or light earth should conceal the trap, and it should be fastened to a movable clog of six or eight pounds weight, as directed on page 17. Wool, moss, leaves or some other soft substance should be packed lightly under the pan and around the jaws. The surface of the earth in the neighborhood of the trap should be brushed with a quill or bush, so that all will seem natural.—Scraps, or small pieces of fried meat rolled in honey, should be scattered over the bed of the trap, except where the pan is. Care should be taken to erase all foot-prints. To make the allurement doubly sure, obtain from the female of the dog, fox, or wolf the matrix in the season of coition, and preserve it in a quart of alchohol tightly corked. Leave a small portion of this preparation on something near the trap; and then putting some of it on the bottom of your boots from time to time, strike large circles in two different directions, leading round to the trap. A piece of bloody meat may be drawn on these circles at the same time. The fox, on striking this trail, will be very sure to follow it round to the trap and be caught.

Another method practiced by woodmen is to set the trap in a spring that does not freeze over in winter, placing it about a half an inch under water and covering the space within the jaws with a piece of moss that rises above the water. A bait of meat should be placed in such a position that the fox, in taking it, will be likely to put his foot on the moss, to prevent wetting it. The essence of the skunk is sometimes used in this case in connection with the bait, with good effect; but most trappers prefer the preparation in alchohol, above mentioned.

Another good way is to obtain from the kennel of some tame fox (if such can be found) a few quarts of loose earth taken from the place where the animal is accustomed to urinate. Set your trap in this material, and bait and smooth the bed as before. The fox, cunning as he is, is not proof against such attractions.

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THE WOLF.

This is a carnivorous animal, belonging to the same family with the fox and the dog. Its body is about four feet long, and its tail sixteen inches. The color is yellowish gray above, and a dirty white beneath, in some places almost approaching to black. Though lean and gaunt in appearance, wolves are fleet and powerful animals. They hunt in troops, and destroy great numbers of deer in the deep stiff snows of winter, sometimes slaughtering whole herds in a single night. The sheepfold also suffers from their depredations. Troops of them have been known to attack and kill men. They feed on almost all the smaller animals that they can overpower. Their breeding season is in April or May, and they have from six to ten young at a time. They burrow in the ground or inhabit hollow logs or caves.

For capturing the wolf by the steel-trap, the directions given in in the first method of taking the fox, on pages 32—33, should be followed, except that the honey should be left out, and the clog of the trap should be of fifteen or twenty pounds weight. The small prairie wolf that is so troublesome to the western farmer, can be captured in the same way. Care should always be taken to keep at a proper distance when looking after the trap, as the wolf's sense of smell is very acute, and enables him to detect the footprints of the hunter with great sagacity.

THE BEAR.

This family of animals is very large, inhabiting nearly all parts of the globe, and ranging through all latitudes from the equator to the poles. Bears differ from each other, in consequence of differences of climate more than almost any other animals. Those that inhabit the frozen wastes near the pole, or such high cold regions as the Rocky Mountains, are monsters of

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strength and ferocity; while those that inhabit warm countries are small, feeble, and inoffensive. The extremes of the scale are the Thibetian bear which weighs less than one hundred pounds, and the polar bear, which is thirteen feet in length, and weighs twenty-four hundred pounds. The American black bear is the variety with which trappers have most to do. It is found in the western and northern parts of the United States, and in the upper and lower provinces of Canada. Its weight when full-grown is from three to six hundred pounds. Bears are omniverous, feeding indiscriminately on roots, berries, nuts, corn, oats, flesh, fish, and turtles. The farmer's calf-pasture, sheep-fold and hog-pen are frequently subject to their depredations. They are particularly fond of honey. They generally sleep through the coldest part of the winter. They bring forth their young in the months of May and June, and generally two at a time. The cubs are hid in caves or hollow trees till they are large enough to follow the dam, and then ramble about with her till the following spring.

The hunting of bears with fire-arms, besides being objectionable on account of injury to the fur, is often dangerous business. They are very tenacious of life, and very bold and ferocious when wounded. A bear shot by Capt. Clark's party in the Rocky Mountain region, survived twenty minutes and swam half a mile after receiving ten balls in his body, four of which passed through his lungs and two through his heart! Records of bear-hunting are full of perilous adventures, and those who engage in open bat-

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tle with the great grizzly bear of the Rocky Mountains, rarely escape without loss of life or limb. But steel-traps of the right size, and properly managed, subdue these monsters with greater certainty than fire-arms, and without danger to the hunter.

In trapping for bears, a place should be selected where three sides of an inclosure can be secured against the entrance of the animal, and one side left open. The experienced hunter usually chooses a spot where one log has fallen across another, making a pen in this shape ⊢. The bait is placed at the inner angle, and the trap at the entrance in such a situation that the bear has to pass over it to get at the bait. The trap should be covered with moss or leaves. Some think it best to put a small stick under the pan, strong enough to prevent the smaller animals, such as the raccoon and skunk, from springing the trap, but not so stiff as to support the heavy foot of the bear. The chain of the trap should be fastened to a clog. (See page 17.) The weight of the clog for a black bear should be thirty pounds; for a grizzly bear, eighty pounds. The chain should not be more than eighteen inches in length, as the habit of the bear, when caught, is to attempt to dash the trap in pieces against trees, logs or rocks; and with a short chain fastened to a heavy clog, he is unable to do this. The bait should be meat, and the bear should be invited to the feast by the smell of honey or honey-comb, burnt on heated stones, near the trap. Bears seem to entertain no suspicion of a trap, and enter it as readily as a hog or an ox.

THE RACCOON.

This animal is allied to the bear tribe. Its head resembles the fox's. Its body is about two feet long, and very thick and stout like the badger's. Its tail is about a foot long, large and bushy. The color of the whole is grayish white, streaked with darker colors. In some of the western states of the Union the raccoon is of altogether a darker color, sometimes approaching to black. This animal is nocturnal, hybernating and omniver-

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ous in its habits. It feeds on nuts, green corn, eggs, mice, frogs, turtles, fish, shell-fish, birds, &c., and frequently makes havoc in the poultry-yard. It is an excellent swimmer, and is fond of rambling about small streams and marshes in search of frogs, shell-fish and turtles. It is also a good climber, and generally lives and rears its young in the hollow of a tree, with the entrance at a considerable height from the ground. Its breeding season is in April or May, and from four to six young are brought forth at a time.

Raccoons are sometimes taken by secreting traps in the paths which they make into cornfields. Or traps may be set by the side of streams where they resort. In this case they should be baited with fresh fish; or as some prefer, with salt codfish, roasted to give it a strong smell. They are not very cunning; and with their acute sense of smell, and their keen appetite for such provender, they rarely pass a trap thus baited without being taken.

THE BADGER.

This animal also belongs to the bear family. Its length is about two and a half feet. The tail is short. The head is small, flat, and has a long snout. The body is flat, as though compressed. The legs are sturdy and powerful. The feet, before and behind, have each five toes strongly set in the flesh, and armed with powerful compressed claws, adapted to burrowing in the ground, digging for roots, and unearthing the marmot and the ground squirrel. The badger feeds on roots, fruit and flesh. Its bite is terrible, and none but the most powerful dogs can encounter it successfully. When pursued, it commences digging in the earth, and if pressed too closely to be able to hide by burrowing, it makes a hole large enough to cover its body, backs into it, and faces its pursuers with claws drawn in an attitude of defiance; and woe to the dog that attempts to dislodge it from its fort. If it has time to get its body fairly buried, it is secure from any dog, or even a man with a shovel; as it digs so rapidly that it will

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work its way into the earth faster than dog or man can follow. It is said that every hair of the badger has three distinct colors; yellowish-white at the root; black at the middle; and ashy-gray at the end. This gives a uniform sandy-gray color to all the upper parts. The female badger produces from three to five young at a birth, suckles them five or six weeks, and then turns them off to shift for themselves. The fur of the badger, when properly dressed, is said to make the best piston furniture, and the coarser hairs are used for the fine brushes of the oil-painter.

Badgers can be taken by setting traps at the mouths of their holes, or by the method prescribed for taking the raccoon on the previous page.

THE WILDCAT.

This animal, (sometimes called the bay Lynx), is about thirty inches long, with a tail of five or six inches, and weighs from seventeen to twenty pounds. Its general color is reddish-brown in winter, and ashy-brown in spring and summer, with whitish spots bordered with black on the hinder parts of the ears. It is a cowardly animal, rarely attacking anything larger than a hare, or a young pig or lamb. The pioneer's hen-roost sometimes suffers from its nocturnal visitations. It feeds on partridges, quails, squirrels, mice, &c., and is fond of the dark thick cedar swamps, where it preys on rabbits, pouncing upon them from an overhanging cliff or tree.

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Wild-cats are frequently taken in the same way as raccoons or minks, by baiting with meat and covering the trap smoothly over. The best way is to find a place where they have killed a hare, partridge, or other game, and have left a part of the flesh for a second meal. Set your trap there and it will be pretty sure of a visit.

[NOTE BY THE EDITOR.—Our picture of the wild-cat probably represents an animal that was brought from Europe, and is quite different from the American bay Lynx. Goodrich gives the following interesting account of the true wild-cat's relations to the common cat:]

"There are many kinds of wild-cat, but that from which the domestic cat is supposed to have sprung is called the *common European Wild-Cat*, and is found in most parts of that quarter of the globe, as well as in Asia and Africa; it is also sometimes met with in this country. When America was first discovered, this species, either tame or wild, was not found here; all our domestic cats, as well as the wild ones occasionally found in the woods, are the descendants of those brought hither by the Europeans. The wild-cats of the European continent are either the descendants of the original races that have continued untamed from the beginning, or of domesticated cats that have wandered from their homes, and, living apart from man, have relapsed into barbarism. It is said that the wild and tame cats, in their wanderings, sometimes meet; when this is the case, the females of the tame breed are well treated by the savage cats, but the males are rudely set upon and sometimes torn in pieces. The wild and tame cats sometimes breed together, and produce the kind called *Tiger-Cats.* Some authors hold that the wild-cat is a distinct species, because its tail is shorter and more bushy than that of the domestic cat; but this opinion seems not well founded, for still greater differences are found in dogs which are acknowledgd to be of the same race."

THE LYNX.

This is a larger kind of wild-cat. The head is short; the ears erect and tufted. The body is about three feet long, and the tail five or six inches. The feet are very large, and in winter are densely furred. The color is brownish gray. The lynx lives in the darkest woods and swamps, preying on rabbits, squirrels, partridges, and smaller birds, and rarely attacking the deer. When pressed with hunger it prowls about the pioneer's cabin in search of lambs, pigs and poultry. It is an active climber, and frequently seizes its prey by pouncing upon it from an overhanging tree. At other times it crawls stealthily like a cat within

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springing distance of its victim, or leaps upon it from a cliff. The female brings forth generally two young ones at time, and hides them in hollow trees, logs or caves till they are large enough to follow her.

The lynx readily enters a trap that is properly set and baited with meat. The general directions already given for trapping various carniverous animals, are applicable in this case, and are sufficient.

THE PANTHER.

This is a still larger animal of the cat tribe, inhabiting every latitude from Canada to Patagonia, in South America. Full grown panthers killed in northern New York have been known to measure ten feet from the nose to the tip of the tail, being twenty-eight inches high, and weighing nearly two hundred pounds. Their color is a reddish-brown above, shading into a lighter color underneath. They are armed with sharp teeth and long heavy claws. They feed chiefly on deer, crawling stealthily to within springing distance, or watching on some cliff or tree, and pouncing like a cat on their prey. Their activity enables them to take the deer with ease. It is asserted by hunters that each panther destroys as many as two deer per week, and a pair of panthers have been known to attack and kill a full-grown moose. In newly settled countries, they frequently carry off young cattle and sheep. They are good climbers and readily take to a tree when pursued by dogs, from which they can easily be brought down by the rifle. This is the most common way of taking them.

The best way to take them with steel-traps is to find a place where they have killed a deer and left a part of the carcass. Secrete the trap near the remains, and you will catch them when they return for a second meal.

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THE OPOSSUM.

This animal inhabits the warmer parts of the United States. In form it somewhat resembles the common house rat. Its body is about twenty inches long, stoutly built, and its tail, which is generally fifteen inches in length, is prehensile, like that of some monkeys, i. e., capable of holding on to anything that it encircles. The opossum is five-toed, and walks on the sole of its foot like the bear. Its ears are large, rounded, and almost naked. The female has from nine to thirteen teats, the odd one being in the center of the ring formed by the rest. The fur is long, soft and wooly, whitish at the roots, and brown at the top. The opossum is omniverous, feeding on corn, nuts, berries, roots, insects, young birds, eggs, mice, &c. It is nocturnal in its habits; hiding in the thick foliage of the trees in the daytime, and seeking its food by night. It is an active climber, and is said to spend much of its time and even to sleep suspended from the limb of a tree by the tail! The females are very prolific, producing from nine to thirteen young at a birth, and three or even four litters in a year. They are provided with a pouch under the belly, in which they protect and suckle their young.

These animals are trapped in the same manner as the raccoon and the badger, by setting traps in their haunts, and baiting with any of their favorite kinds of food. They have a habit when caught, of feigning death, and will bear considerable torture, without betraying any signs of life. This habit doubtless gave rise to the common by-word which calls certain kinds of deceit "playing possum."

THE SKUNK.

This animal, though generally much despised in this country, is said to furnish the staple fur to Poland, and deserves at least the respectful attention of the trapper. It is related to the weasel. Its head is small, with a projecting naked nose, small piercing

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eyes, and short rounded ears. The body is about eighteen inches long; the tail twelve or fourteen inches, and bushy. The feet are short, and well adapted to digging, having naked soles and closely united toes with claws. The prevailing color is white and

black, some varieties being mostly white and others mostly black. The fur of the latter is the most valuable. The skunk walks with its back much curved, and its tail erect, as though proud of its beauty. It is nocturnal in its habits, and during the summer months searches the fields in the vicinity of its haunts every night, feeding principally on worms, bugs and grasshoppers, but sometimes devouring frogs, mice, young birds, green corn, &c., and occasionally making free with poultry and eggs. Its services in clearing the farmer's fields and gardens of bugs and worms more than pay for its depredations, and it ought to be regarded as a useful animal. Its breeding season is in April or May. From six to nine young are brought forth at a litter, and are reared in holes or among rocks, till they are large enough to shift for themselves.

These animals are taken in traps set at the mouths of their holes or in the fields where they search for food. The trap should be covered with loose earth or soft vegetable substances, and should

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be baited with small pieces of meat scattered around it. They are not cunning and require no great skill in taking them. The great difficulty in trapping for them or meddling with them in any way is in the liability of catching a charge of their perfumery, which is very disagreable, and ruins all clothing that is once impregnated with it. This offensive essence is ejected from two glands near the anus by the contraction of the muscular coverings, and the only way that I know to prevent the discharge is to approach the animal in the trap stealthily, and give it a smart blow with a club across the back near the tail, which will paralyze the ejecting muscles. But this expedient is not always available, as the animal sometimes takes the trap for a living enemy and discharges when first taken. One thing, however, is in its favor, viz., it is very neat in its personal habits, rarely allowing its own fur to be soiled with its offensive secretions; so that if you can get away its skin without being overwhelmed yourself by its perfumery, your spoil is likely to be as clean and saleable as in the case of any other animal.

[We are indebted to an old Connecticut trapper, for the following valuable addition to Mr. Newhouse's article on the skunk.—EDITOR.]

"In summer skunks can be taken in great numbers by the following method: Find a place where they travel from their holes to a hen-coop or through a corn-field. Make a path for them by treading down the grass, and set up sticks along on each side to guide them more surely. Set traps at intervals, and strew pieces of meat or dead mice before and behind each trap. A whole family of skunks will walk down this path, the old ones heading the procession; and as one after another is caught, those behind will climb over and pass on, till all are taken. I have caught in this way two old ones and eight young ones in one path on a single evening. They seldom discharge when first caught; and can be prevented from doing so at all, either by a blow on the back, or by boldly seizing the parts where the offensive secretion lies, with one hand, and piercing the throat with a knife in the other.

"In winter my method is to track them to their holes and dig them out. They are obliged to go to some stream for water every day, and when there is snow, they can easily be tracked back to their burrows. In digging them out, I prevent them

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from using their terrible weapon by carefully uncovering only one at a time, and only the head of each at first, filling in and even "tamping" the dirt around the body, till I can despatch them in succession by opening the jugular vein.

"The surest way to take skunks without bad consequences is by the snare and spring-pole.

"With all the precautions that can be taken, the trapper's clothes will sometimes be sprinkled; and there will be more or less scent about the skins. The best way to cleanse articles in this condition is to hold them over a fire of red-cedar boughs, and afterwards sprinkle them with chloride of lime."—H. MANSFIELD.

To give a complete view of the business of trapping, several less valuable animals should be briefly noticed, not as fur-bearing, but as legitimate subjects of the trapper's art. They are too familiar to need description, and I shall barely indicate the approved methods of taking them.

THE WOODCHUCK.

The skin of this animal is valuable for whip-lashes, and its fur even is not despised by rustics. It burrows in the ground, and is taken by setting the trap, completely covered and without bait, in the mouth of its hole.

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THE SQUIRREL.

Some of the varieties of this animal bear fur that is not altogether contemptible; but squirrels are generally taken either for food or as nuisances. The trap should be set on the top-rail of a fence near a wood that is frequented by them. A pole with an ear of corn stuck on the end of it should be set up by the side of the fence, leaning in such a position as to bring the corn over the trap at the height of six or eight inches. In reaching for the corn, the squirrel gets into the trap.

THE RAT.

This pest of all countries may be taken in any or all of the following ways: 1. Set your trap in a pan of meal or bran; cover it with meal and set the pan near the run-ways of the rats; or, 2, set the trap in a path at the mouth of a rat's hole, with a piece of thin brown paper or cloth spread smoothly over it; or, 3, make a run-way for the rats by placing a box, barrel or board near a wall, leaving room for them to pass, and set the trap in the passage, covered as before. In all cases, the trap should be thoroughly smoked over a fire or heated over a stove before it is set, and at every re-setting; but care should be taken not to over-heat the trap so as to draw the temper of the spring. Also the position of the trap should be frequently changed.

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To conclude these instructions for capturing animals, I will introduce the trapper to one or two of a larger and nobler family, which he will find well worthy of his attention, not for their skins or furs, (though these are valuable), but for their flesh, which, in his more distant and adventurous excursions, will often be the only resource of his commissariat. The soldier must look out, not only for his means of fighting, but for his means of living—for his larder as well as for his enemy—and happily I can show the soldiers of the trap how to supply themselves with food by the same weapons that they use in taking animals for their furs.

THE DEER.

The books say that this family of ruminating animals embraces a very great variety of species, ranging in size from the lilliputian munt-joe, which is fifteen inches high, to the gigantic moose whose height is seven or eight feet. But the common red deer of America is the species with which our trapping readers are most practically concerned. These animals are found in nearly all the states of the Union, and abound in both provinces of Canada. They are gregarious in their habits, though frequently seen alone. Their food in summer consists of twigs, grass, berries, nuts, roots, acorns, persimmons, &c., and at that season they frequent rivers and lakes to feed on water-plants, as well as for the purpose of freeing themselves from insect pests. They are also fond of visiting the pioneer's clearing and appropriating his wheat, corn, oats, potatoes, turnips and cabbages. In winter they retire to the elevated ridges, where maple and other hard-wood trees abound, the bark, twigs and branches of which are at that season their chief support. They form "yards" by trampling down the deep snows, and live together in large herds, numbering sometimes thirty animals in a single "yard." These inclosures are en-

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larged from time to time as the deer require more trees for browsing. Wolves and panthers are their most formidable enemies—always excepting man. Packs of wolves frequently attack them in their "yards," and sometimes when the snow is deep and crusted over, whole herds are destroyed. Wolves sometimes pursue a single deer with the "long chase." In summer a deer thus pursued generally takes to the water, and so baffles his pursuers; but in winter when the streams and lakes are frozen over, he rarely escapes. Panthers take deer by crawling within springing distance of them in their "yards" or elsewhere, or by watching and pouncing on them from some cliff or tree, as they pass below.

The methods by which men take deer are various. They are sometimes driven by dogs into rivers or lakes, and are then overtaken and dispatched by the hunter in his canoe. A favorite method is to shoot them at night at the places by the waterside, where they resort to feed on aquatic plants and relieve themselves of insects. For this purpose the hunter prepares himself with a boat, gun, and lamp. The light is set on the bow of the boat, so that it will shine on the forward sight of the gun and at the same time conceal by its glare the hunter crouching behind.—With muffled oar the boat approaches the game. The reflected gleams from the eyes of the deer betray his position to the hunter. If no noise is made the victim will stand and gaze at the light until it is within a few yards, and so give a sure opportunity for the fatal shot. Many are taken in this way in the early autumn; and later in the season, when snow first comes, many more are taken by the "still hunt," either by following on their trail, or by watching at their run-ways.

The steel-trap, it must be confessed, is not much used for taking deer; and I am not sure but that this use of it is regarded by sportsmen as somewhat barbarous. But all the ways of deceiving and killing these noble animals seem to be open to the same objection; and the necessities of the trapper, often forbid him to be very particular as to the means of furnishing himself with food. There are times when the trap is the best, and even the only, available means of taking deer; for instance, when the trapper is without his rifle, or has exhausted his ammunition, and finds himself in the far wilderness without food. In such circumstances, he might starve if he could not betake himself to his

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traps for supply. And even when rifle and ammunition are at hand, sometimes in dry weather (technically called a "noisy time") every thing is so crisp and crackling under foot, that it is impossible to approach the deer within shooting distance. I therefore recommend to practical woodsmen to learn how to take deer in traps, and not be over-scrupulous in doing so when occasion requires.

For taking deer the trap must be a strong one, and the jaws should be spiked, and so shaped and adjusted that when sprung they will remain open about half an inch, to prevent breaking the bone. The trap should be placed in the path of the deer where it crosses a stream, or enters a lake; and it should be set under water and concealed with some covering. If it is as heavy as it ought to be (say of three or four pounds weight), it should not be fastened at all or even clogged; as the animal is very active and violent when taken, and will be sure to break loose by tearing off a limb or smashing the trap, if his motions are much impeded. If the trap is left loose, the deer, when caught, will make a few desperate plunges and then lie down; and will seldom be found more than ten or fifteen rods from where he was taken. When the hunter approaches, he will make a few more plunges, but can easily be dispatched.

THE MOOSE.

This is the largest kind of deer, and its habits are in many respects like that of the common deer. It is more confined to the snowy regions of the north; being found chiefly in northern New York, Maine, Canada, Nova Scotia and Labrador. Its general color is yellowish-brown or ashy-gray. The hair in summer is short and soft, and long and coarse in winter. The full-grown moose weighs

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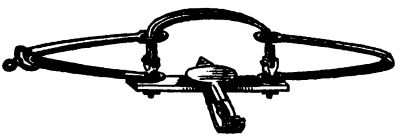
from eight to fifteen hundred pounds, and stands seven and even eight feet high. Its horns have an expanse of nearly six feet between the tips, and a palm or spade on each, of a foot in width, and weigh from forty-five to seventy pounds. Under the throat of both sexes, there is a tuft of coarse, bristly hair, a foot or more in length, attached to a sort of dewlap. The breeding season of the moose is in May. At the first birth, but a single one is brought forth; afterwards two are brought forth annually. Moose, like the common deer, frequent rivers and lakes in summer, to feed on the roots of the water-lily and other aquatic plants; and retire in winter to the high ridges to browse on the twigs of the maple and beech. Their height enables them to crop the overhanging branches of large trees, and their weight and strength enable them to bend down small trees and slide over them with their bodies, stripping the bark and twigs to the very extremities. Like the common deer they form "yards" by treading down the snows, and enlarge them as fast as they strip the trees and require more. In these "yards" there is commonly found a male, female, and two fawns.

Moose are taken in winter by the "long chase" on snow-shoes, and in summer they are shot at their feeding places in marshes. They can easily be taken either in summer or winter by setting steel-traps in their haunts, as they are not cunning, and enter a trap as readily as an ox or a horse. The trap should be a strong one of about forty pounds weight, and it should be fastened to a clog of sixty pounds weight.

The flesh of the moose is much esteemed by hunters and trappers, being generally preferred to that of the common deer. The marrow in the large bones is an excellent substitute for butter.



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III. CURING SKINS.

However successful a trapper may be in taking animals, he will not secure a full reward for his labor unless he knows how to take care of their skins, and prepare them for market in such a manner that they will command the highest prices. As skins that have been riddled with shot find little favor with fur-dealers, so skins that have been cut in stripping off, or that are encumbered with remnants of flesh, or that have passed into a state of incipient putrefaction before drying, or that have not been properly stretched, or that have been dried too fast, or that have been neglected and exposed after being cured, are very sure to be thrown out by the fur-inspector as second- or third-rate skins, deserving only poor prices. Great quantities of valuable furs, taken by boys and inexperienced trappers, are rendered almost worthless by bad treatment in some of the processes of preservation. I shall give such information on this part of the trapper's business as I have obtained, both from my own experience, and from conversation with fur-dealers.

GENERAL RULES.

1. Be careful to visit your traps often enough, so that the skins will not have time to get tainted.

2. As soon as possible after an animal is dead and dry, attend to the skinning and curing.

3. Scrape off all superfluous flesh and fat, but be careful not to go so deep as to cut the fiber of the skin.

4. Never dry a skin by the fire or in the sun, but in a cool shady place, sheltered from rain. If you use a barn door for a stretcher, (as boys sometimes do), nail the skin on the *inside* of the door.

5. Never use "preparations" of any kind in curing skins; nor even wash them in water, but simply stretch and dry them as they are taken from the animal.

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STRETCHING SKINS.

In drying skins, it is important that they should be stretched tight, like a strained drum-head. This can be done after a fashion by simply nailing them flat on a wide board or a barn door. But this method, besides being impracticable on the large scale in the woods, (where most skins have to be cured), is objectionable because it exposes only one side of the pelt to the air. The stretchers that are generally approved and used by good trappers are of three kinds, adapted to the skins of different classes of animals. I shall call them the *board-stretcher*, the *bow-stretcher*, and the *hoop-stretcher*, and will describe them, indicating the different animals to which each is adapted.

THE BOARD-STRETCHER.

This contrivance is made in the following manner: Prepare a board of basswood or other light material, two feet three inches long, three inches and a half wide at one end, and two inches and an eighth at the other, and three-eighths of an inch thick. Champer it from the center to the sides almost to an edge. Round and champer the small end about an inch up on the sides. Split this board through the center with a knife or saw. Finally prepare a wedge of the same length and thickness, one inch wide at the large end, and tapering to three-eighths of an inch at the small end, to be driven between the halves of the board. This is a stretcher suitable for a mink or a marten. Two larger sizes with similar proportions, are required for the larger animals. The largest size, suitable for the full-grown otter or wolf, should be five feet and a half long, seven inches wide at the large end when fully spread by the wedge, and six inches at the small end. An intermediate size is required for the fisher, raccoon, fox, and some other animals, the proportions of which can be easily figured out.

These stretchers require that the skin of the animal should not be ripped through the belly, but should be stripped off whole. This is done in the following manner: Commence with the knife at the hind feet and slit down to the vent. Cut around the vent, and strip the skin from the bone of the tail with the help of the thumb nail or a split stick. Make no other slits in the skin, except in the case of the otter, whose tail requires to be split, spread

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and tacked on to the board. Peel the skin from the body by drawing it over itself, leaving the fur side inward. In this condition the skin should be drawn on to the split board, (with the back on one side and the belly on the other,) to its utmost length, and fastened with tacks or by notches cut in the edge of the board, and then the wedge should be driven between the two halves. Finally, make all fast by a tack at the root of the tail, and another on the opposite side. The skin is then stretched to its utmost capacity as a boot-leg is stretched by the shoemaker's "tree," and it may be hung away in the proper place, by a hole in one end of the stretcher, and left to dry.

A modification of this kind of stretcher, often used in curing the skins of the muskrat and other small animals, is a simple board, without split or wedge, three-sixteenths of an inch thick, eighteen inches long, six inches wide at the large end, and tapering to five and a half inches at the small end, champered and rounded as in the other cases. The animal should be skinned as before directed, and the skin drawn tightly on to the board, and fastened with about four tacks. Sets of these boards, sufficient for a muskrat campaign can easily be made and transported. They are very light and take up but little room in packing, thirty-two of them making but six inches in thickness.

THE BOW-STRETCHER.

The most common way of treating the muskrat is to cut off its feet with a hatchet; and rip with a knife from between the two teeth in the lower jaw, down the belly, about two inches below where the fore legs come out. Then the skin is started by cutting around the lips, eyes and ears, and is stripped over the body, with the fur side inward. Finally a stick of birch, water-beech, iron-wood, hickory or elm, an inch in diameter at the butt, and three feet and a half long, is bent into the shape of an ox-bow and shoved into the skin, which is drawn tight, and fastened by splitting down a sliver in the bow, and drawing the skin of the lip into it.

This method is too common to be easily abolished, and is tolerable when circumstances make it necessary; but the former method of stretching by a tapering board, in the case of muskrats, as well as other small animals, is much the

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best. Skins treated in that way keep their proper shape, and pack better than those stretched on bows, and in the long run boards are more economical than bows, as a set of them can be used many times, and will last several years; whereas bows are seldom used more than once, being generally broken in taking out.

THE HOOP-STRETCHER.

The skins of large animals, such as the beaver and the bear, are best dried by spreading them, at full size, in a hoop. For this purpose, a stick of hickory or other flexible wood, should be cut, long enough to entirely surround the skin when bent. The ends should be brought around, lapped, and tied with a string or a withe of bark. The skin should be taken from the animal, by ripping from the lower front teeth to the vent, and peeling around the lips, eyes and ears, but without ripping up the legs. It should then be placed inside the hoop and fastened at opposite sides, with twine or bark, till all loose parts are taken up, and the whole stretched so that it is nearly round and as tight as a drumhead. When it is dry it may be taken from the hoop and is ready for packing and transportation.

This is the proper method of treating the skin of the deer. Some prefer it for the wolf and raccoon. In many cases the trapper may take his choice between the hoop and the board method. One or the other of these methods will be found satisfactory for curing all kinds of skins.

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IV. LIFE IN THE WOODS.

[The outfit for campaigning in the woods proposed by Mr. Newhouse in the following chapter seems to us rather elaborate and luxurious, adapted perhaps better to amateur sportsmen than to the "rough and ready" followers of the trap. But it is best to encourage and help forward as far as possible good civilized living, even in wild places. Those who prefer a freer and less expensive style of outfit, can leave Mr. Newhouse and take lessons of the older trapper, John Hutchins, whose programme, given further on, is simple enough for the hardiest.—EDITOR.]

THE great question after all for the trapper as well as for the soldier, is, how to live and keep himself comfortable while he carries on the war. He requires in some respects even more than a soldier's courage, for he is to encounter the hardships of camp-life *alone*, or with but one or two companions, and without a baggage-train to bring up provisions at every halt. The very first article of outfit that he should equip himself with, I should say, would be a firm trust in Providence. But as Cromwell told his soldiers to "trust God and keep their powder dry," so the trapper will need to provide some things for himself, while he trusts Providence. I will therefore tell him as well as I can how I equip myself for life in the woods.

OUTFIT FOR A CAMPAIGN ON FOOT.

If the region in which you propose to trap cannot be reached by boat or wagon, you must be content with such necessaries as you can carry on your person. A trapper on foot should not tire himself with long stiff-legged boots, but should wear short half-boots (with soles well nailed) fitting snugly above and around the ankle. His pants should be gray woolen, closely fitting below the knee, but roomy above. His coat should be of the same material and color, with plenty of pocket-room. His hat should be of soft felt, gray, and with a moderate brim. He should carry a "change" of woolen drawers, wrappers, shirts and stockings. A towel with soap, a night-cap and a blanket, or, what is better, a canton-flannel bag to sleep in, will complete his personal equipments. Then he must carry for shelter a small tent, made of firm cotton-drilling, weighing not more than four or five pounds;

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for subsistence, a double-barelled gun (rifle and shot), weighing eight or nine pounds, with ammunition, and fishing-tackle; and for all sorts of purposes, an ax of two and a half pounds (with a good length of handle), and plenty of tacks. For cooking and table-service he must carry a frying-pan, a camp-kettle, a hunting-knife, some knives and forks, spoons of two sizes, a few tin pressed plates and basins, and a drinking-cup. Above all he must not forget to take a good supply of matches, and a pocket-compass. These necessaries (exclusive of clothing) will weigh, according to my reckoning, about twenty-five pounds. The rest of his load must be made up of traps and provisions. If he is stout enough to undertake trapping on foot, he ought to be able to travel with about fifty pounds. He may take then five pounds of provisions and twenty pounds of traps, or any other proportion of these articles that will make up the remaining twenty-five pounds. His provisions should consist of articles that will be desirable as accompaniments to the produce of his gun and fishing-tackle, viz., sugar, tea and coffee (rather than whiskey), salt, pepper, butter, lard, sifted Indian meal, white beans, crackers, &c. The butter and lard should be put up in air-tight cans, and on arrival at the trapping grounds should be sunk in a spring. The best kind of knapsack for carrying such an outfit is made of rubber-cloth with shoulder straps; but you can easily convert your sleeping-bag or your blanket into a knapsack that will serve very well. If you trap with one companion or more (which is a good plan and according to the general practice), many of the articles named in the above list will answer for the party, and so the load for individuals will be lightened. Thus equipped, you can turn your back on the haunts of men, march into the wilderness, and with a little hunting and fishing in the intervals of trap-duty, live pleasantly for months, and return with your load of furs, a fatter and healthier man than when you started.

OUTFIT FOR AN EXCURSION BY WAGON OR BOAT.

If your trapping district can be reached by road or by water, some changes should be made in the foregoing inventory. For the interest of your larder it will be best to take a heavier gun, more ammunition, and a greater variety of fishing-tackle. A lamp and lantern, with a supply of oil, a camp-hatchet of three

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or four pounds weight with a fourteen-inch handle, a stone for sharpening knives, axes and hooks, a magazine of needles, thread scissors, &c., and many other like conveniences, may be stowed away in the odd corners of your luggage. You may also carry more clothing and more provisions—such as potatoes—and ought certainly to take along at least one hundred and fifty traps of different sizes, and a good set of board-stretchers for curing skins.

TENT.

In the place of the light half-tent recommended for a campaign on foot, you should take a regular tent of eight or nine pounds weight, house-shaped and buttoning up in front. This should be dipped two or three times in a solution prepared by mixing equal parts of sugar of lead and alum in a pailful of milk-warm water. This treatment will render the tent almost impervious to rain, and will protect it from the sparks of fire that will occasionally be blown upon it. Instead of a ridge-pole and two forked stakes for supporting it, all you need is a cord thirty or forty feet long, to be drawn through the ridge of the tent, fastened to it about midway, and tied at the ends to two trees at the proper height. The sides should be drawn down tight and fastened by hooks driven into the ground.

STOVE AND FURNITURE.

A much needed convenience for life in the woods is a stove with its furniture, that shall, on the one hand afford all necessary facilities for cooking and warming, and on the other shall take up the least possible room in packing. Having devoted considerable study to this matter, I flatter myself that I can put the ingenious trapper in a way to make or procure the exact article that he wants. Your stove should be made of sheet-iron, and should be twenty-seven inches long, ten inches wide, and eight inches deep, having on the top two eight-inch holes for boilers and one four-inch hole for the smoke-pipe. Ten feet of pipe will be sufficient, and this can be made in five joints of two feet each, tapering in the whole length from four inches in diameter to three, so that the joints will slip into each other and the whole can be packed for transportation inside the stove. For an outlet of the pipe through the roof of the tent, there should be a piece of tin, ten in-

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ches square (with an oblong hole), to be fastened at the proper place on the roof by means of lappels. The furniture of the stove should be two dripping-pans of Russia iron; one thirteen inches long, nine inches wide and an inch and a quarter deep; the other enough smaller to pack inside the first; a kettle, also of Russia iron, nine inches across the top, seven inches and a half deep, and six inches and a half across the bottom; and two or three tin pails and several basins, all made in a diminishing series, so that they will slip into each other, and all into the iron kettle. The kettle and pails match the holes in the top of the stove, and when used in cooking tea, coffee, &c., should be covered with tin pressed plates. The whole of this furniture can be packed with the pipe in the stove. For supporting the stove in the tent, prepare two rods of half-inch iron, eighteen inches long, bent in this shape ⌐——⌐. The depression in the middle is for the width of the stove, and the toe at each end should be made sharp. Then, to set up your stove, drive four stakes into the ground under the hole in the roof (so as to make a square of eighteen inches), leaving the ends level with each other at any desired height, and place the rods on the stakes in proper form to receive the stove, driving the toes into the wood. Place your stove in the depressions of the rods, set up your pipe, and you are ready for house-keeping. Your tent is large enough to accommodate any number of persons from two to six; and your stove will warm them and do their cooking, with an amount of fuel that will be a mere trifle compared with what is required for an open fire. It has the advantage also of giving a quick heat, and with a damper will keep fire all night.

BED AND BEDDING.

Good sleeping-accommodations can be provided in the following manner: Take two pieces of sacking or other coarse cloth, six and a half feet long and two feet and three-quarters wide, and sew them firmly together at the sides, making a bag with both ends open. Cut two poles, each seven feet long and two inches in diameter, and run them through the bag, resting the ends in notches on two logs placed parallel to each other at the proper distance apart. The notches should be so far apart that the poles will tightly stretch the bag. Four forked stakes, if more convenient, may be substituted for the logs and driven into

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the ground so as to receive the ends of the poles and stretch the sacking. The space in the bag between the poles should be filled with dry grass, leaves, evergreen-boughs or moss, which will give it the warmth and softness of a straw bed. By this arrangement you have an extempore bedstead raising you above the cold, damp ground, and a bed as good as the best. For bed-clothes the best contrivance is a bag made of wide, firm Canton flannel, six and a half feet long, open at one end. Let the tired hunter insert himself in this bag feet foremost, and he will need no "tucking up" to keep him comfortable even on the ground or in the snow; and if he is fortunate enough to be perched on such a bed as is above described, in a tent well buttoned up, with a friendly stove at his feet, the cry of the loon, the howl of the wolf, or the scream of the panther, will hardly disturb his slumbers.

CAMP-CHEST.

A chest made of light materials, two feet nine inches in length, eighteen inches in width, and fourteen inches in depth—not larger than an ordinary trunk—will hold in transportation the stove with its pipe and all its furniture, the bed and bedding, the tent and all its rigging, and in fact nearly the whole outfit that has been described. The cover of the chest should be made of two thicknesses of boards, five-eighths of an inch thick, with double hinges, so that the upper lid can be turned back separately, and form with the other lid a good table.

COOKING.

It will not be expected that the trapper's larder will be supplied with all the varieties and luxuries that can be found at the St. Nicholas, or at a Saratoga Hotel. But it will always be a satisfaction to know that flesh, fish and fowl are fresh from their native elements, and have not hung in the market two or three weeks before coming on the table.

The ways of cooking in camp are as various as in the kitchen at home. Fresh fish can be fried in butter, lard, or the fat of the deer; or they can be boiled, or broiled and buttered. Venison can be fried, or broiled in cutlets, or roasted before a camp-fire in joints, or stewed *a la fricasee*, or boiled into soup with potatoes. Squirrels, ducks, partridges, woodcock, quails, pigeons, prairie

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fowls and any other game that comes to hand, can be fried, broiled or boiled, as well in the woods as in the best hotel.

The very best way of cooking fish and fowl ever devised, is familiar to woodsmen, but unknown to city epicures. It is this: Take a large fish—say a trout of three or four pounds, fresh from its gambols in the cool stream;—cut a small hole at the neck and abstract the intestines. Wash the inside clean, and season it with pepper and salt; or if convenient, fill it with stuffing made of bread-crumbs or crackers chopped up with meat. Make a fire outside the tent, and when it has burned down to embers, rake it open, put in the fish, and cover it with the coals and hot ashes. Within an hour take it from its bed, peel off the skin from the clean flesh, and you will have a trout with all its original juices and flavors preserved within it—a dish too good, as old Walton would say, "for any but very honest men."

Partridges, ducks, and various other fowls can be cooked deliciously in a similar way. The intestines of the bird should be taken out by a small hole at the vent, and the inside washed and stuffed as before. Then wet the feathers thoroughly, and cover with hot embers. When the cooking is finished, peel off the burnt feathers and skin, and you will find underneath a lump of nice white flesh, which, when once tasted, will never be forgotten. The peculiar advantage of this method of roasting is that the covering of embers prevents the escape of the juices by evaporation.

Everybody knows how to cook potatoes and make tea and coffee, and anybody fit for a trapper must "know beans," and how to cook them. But bread! asks the novice; what are we to do for bread? Well, we have good sifted, Indian meal, and we will put some into a basin or pail, add a little salt, pour on scalding water, and mix to the consistency of stiff batter. After our venison or fish is cooked, we will put this batter into the hot fat that remains, a spoonful in a place, leveling it down smoothly, and turning it over till it is "done brown." Such a Johnny-cake, served up with butter and sugar, would tempt a man to leave the best wheat bread that ever was made.

JERKED MEAT.

If you have the fortune to kill a deer or a moose in warm

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weather, and have an over supply of meat that is likely to be tainted, you can preserve it by the following process: Cut all the flesh from the bones in thin strips, and place them, for convenience, on the inside of the hide. Add two or three quarts of salt for a moose, and a pint and a half for a deer, well worked in. Cover the whole with the sides and corners of the hide to keep out flies, and let it remain in this condition about two hours. Drive four forked stakes into the ground so as to form a square of about eight or ten feet, leaving the forks four feet high. Lay two poles across one way in these forks, and fill the whole space the other way with poles laid on the first two, about two inches apart. The strips of flesh should then be laid across the poles, and a small fire of clean hard wood should be started underneath, and kept up for twenty-four hours. This process will reduce the weight of the flesh more than half, bringing it to a condition like that of dried or smoked beef—in which it will keep any length of time. This is called *jerked venison.* It is good eating, and always commands a high price in market.—An over supply of fish can be treated in the same manner. They should be split open on the back and the backbone taken out.

PREPARATIONS AGAINST INSECTS.

In the warm months, chiefly from the first of June to the first of September, woodsmen are annoyed by myriads of flies, gnats, and mosquitoes. These can be driven out of a tent by smoke, and can be kept out by buttoning all tight. But the trapper should also provide himself with a protective against these pests. A good preparation for this purpose may be made by warming about three ounces of hog's-lard, and adding to it half an ounce of the oil of pennyroyal. This ointment applied to the parts exposed once in an hour or less, will give entire protection.

Another preparation can be made by mixing equal parts of common tar with sweet oil; applying as before. This preparation is by some considered the best, because it also prevents tanning, and is easily washed off with soap, leaving the skin soft and white.

THE SHANTY.

The tent which I have recommended is probably best adapted to the irregular operations of amateur sportsmen—the volunteers

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and guerillas of the trap. The old regulars and veterans of the service always have built, and probably will continue to build, rude huts, called shanties, at various points in the region of their operations. Shanties are of two kinds, temporary and permanent. The temporary shanty is made by driving two forked stakes into the ground, laying a ridge-pole across, leaning many other poles against this, and covering the skeleton thus formed with bark or split boards. The permanent shanty is made of logs, laid one above another in a square form, joined at the corners by means of notches, and roofed over with poles and split boards, the crevices being stopped with clay or thatching.

TRAPPING LINES.

Trapping, when carried on systematically and on the large scale, has, like an army, its lines of operation, its depots of provisions, and its arrangements for keeping open its communications with its base. The general proceedings of a regular trapping campaign may be described, as follows: The trapping company, which consists generally of two, three, or four persons, start out a little before the trapping season commences; select their lines, extending into the woods frequently from thirty to fifty miles; carry along and deposit at intervals on the line, traps and provisions; and build shanties at convenient points for sleeping-posts and shelters from storms. These preparations sometimes require several journeys and returns, and are made in advance of the trapping season, so that when trapping commences all hands may have nothing else to attend to. If the line extends directly from a settlement, so that it has what may be called a home-base, none but rude, temporary shanties are built; and once in about ten days during the season a man is sent back to the settlement, to carry out furs and bring back provisions. But if the line commences so far from the frontier that such return-journeys are impracticable, then, besides the temporary shanties, a more substantial and permanent hut, called the home-shanty, is built at some point on the line, for depositing furs, provisions, and other valuables; and this becomes the base of operations for the season. A boy is sometimes taken along to "keep shanty," as trappers say, i. e., to remain at the home-shanty as house-keeper and guard. Such a resident at the main depot is very necessary, as bears and

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other wild animals (not to mention fire and human thieves) have a habit of breaking into an unguarded shanty and destroying everything within reach. Prudent trappers rarely leave furs in a shanty alone, even though it is strongly barricaded. If they cannot carry them out to the settlement, and have no boy to "keep shanty," they generally hide them in hollow trees. At the close of a season, if the party are satisfied with their line, and intend to trap on it another season, they hide their traps under rocks, where they will not be exposed to the fires that sweep the woods in dry times.

CONCLUSION.

The Trapper's art, like that to which I have so often compared it—the art of war—is, or should be, progressive. It is evidently yet in its infancy, and has hardly begun to emerge from the narrowness and ignorance of mere individual cunning, into the liberal inventiveness and broad combinations which will come when trappers shall gather into conventions, compare experiences, and avail themselves of the help that all sciences are ready to give them. All that I can claim to have done in the preceding pages, is the presentation of the art of capturing animals, curing their skins, and living in the woods, as it now stands, or at least as I understand it. There are doubtless wiser trappers than myself who will criticise my work. I shall learn all I can from them; and if a second edition of this book should ever be published, I promise "to do better the next time."

S. Newhouse

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NARRATIVES.

[In the first three of the following articles illustrating the Trapper's life, we introduce to our readers the Hutchins family, the father and two sons—a trio of "mighty hunters."—EDITOR.]

AN EVENING WITH AN OLD TRAPPER.

BY W. A. HINDS.

Oneida, N. Y., June 1, 1865.

I CANNOT say with the old song—

"A life in the woods for me;"

but still, of all story-tellers give me those who have spent the greater portion of their lives in hunting, fishing, and trapping; who have lived for weeks on wild game; who have tramped for months alone through the forests; who have camped on green boughs, or kept themselves comfortable in deer-skins when the thermometer was far below zero. Such men inspire me with a degree of respect like that entertained for all whose lives have been heroic. Soldiers of the woods, they have often endured hardships superior to those who have carried the knapsack in the open field. Though in many instances unfamiliar with books, they yet have a power of graphic and forcible description, seldom possessed by those who have made language their study. After conversing with them an hour, one feels as though he had himself encountered the bear and the panther, and been successful in hunting the otter and mink.

It would be difficult to find, at least in the Eastern and Middle States, a better representative of this class than MR. JOHN HUTCHINS, now a resident of Manlius, N. Y.

Born in Portland, Somerset County, Maine, November 16, 1801, he is consequently nearly sixty-four years of age; but he is still "eager for the chase," and is at the present time planning a trapping expedition into Canada for the coming autumn. For more than half a century he has spent a portion of each year in trapping and hunting. In his tenth year he caught and shot seventy-three squirrels, six blue-jays, one mink, one weasel, and six partridges. When fourteen years of age he caught a bear

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which had killed a cow in the neighborhood where he lived in Maine; and he estimates the number of animals which he has caught in traps, or otherwise destroyed, as follows: 100 moose; 1000 deer: 10 caribou; 100 bears; 50 wolves; 500 foxes; 100 raccoons; 25 wild-cats; 100 lynx; 150 otter; 600 beaver; 400 fishers; mink and martin by the thousands; muskrats by the ten thousands.

After reading the above list no one will doubt his skill and wisdom in woodcraft, or question the probability of the adventures he relates. He is always ready to communicate to others what he has learned in his long life in the woods; and he takes the same pleasure in recounting his adventures that the scar-worn soldier takes in telling of battles, sieges and marches. On meeting Mr. Hutchins a few evenings since, in company with his son, I interrogated him in true Yankee style as follows:

"In what part of the country have you trapped and hunted?"

"Mostly in Maine, Lower Canada, New-Brunswick and New-York, but some in Vermont and in Michigan."

"At what seasons of the year do you generally trap?"

"I generally commence about the 1st of November, and trap till the 1st of April. There is no certainty of securing prime fur before the 1st of November, and but few kinds are good after the 1st of April. The three kinds, beaver, otter and muskrat are however good till the 1st of May, and the fur of the otter is good even as late in the season as June."

"Do you generally go alone, or with companions?"

"I have trapped alone about one fourth of the time. It is generally more pleasant, but less profitable, to have companions. When game is plenty it answers well to have partners, but I would recommend never to have more than two, and think it nearly always better to have only one companion."

"How many animals have you generally taken on a winter's trip!"

"That depends, of course, entirely upon my fortune in securing good trapping-ground. My son Samuel and I trapped one season in Canada, and caught one hundred and fifty beaver, and the furs of other animals which we caught at the same time, would bring as much money as that of the beaver. The best specimen of luck I ever had was in setting twenty-seven traps,

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and finding a mink, fisher or marten in twenty-five of them. That was on my second trip to Canada."

"How much money did you generally make?"

"That is another difficult question. I have made from $5 to $75 a month."

"Well, then, how much did you make in your best trip?"

"The best trip I ever made was forty years ago. I went out on Dead river in the State of Maine. I was absent from home just one month—started December 3d and returned January 3d;—sold my fur for ninety-seven dollars; and fur was then very cheap. The same fur would now bring several hundred dollars. Two of us have often made $100 a month, or $50 apiece."

"What do you take for an outfit?"

"A double-barrel gun; a hatchet; (I used to carry an ax, but now prefer the hatchet); a butcher-knife; a pocket-knife; a camp-kettle holding about six quarts; a frying-pan; a pint dipper or cup, and a spoon. I go lightly clad—never taking an overcoat, and only a single woolen blanket. For a winter's campaign I take 40 lbs. flour, 10 lbs. pork, 6 qts. beans, 5 lbs. sugar, and 1 lb. of tea. The two last items might be dispensed with. I have lived a week at a time in the woods, eating nothing but moose-meat; and Reuben Howard, a trapper from Connecticut, says he has lived two months at a time on deer's-meat alone."

"If you were starting now, would'nt you take some little conveniences for cooking and camping, beside those you have mentioned?"

"No; the longer one lives the life of a hunter and trapper, the better he learns to get along with few conveniences, and the more desirous he becomes of avoiding luggage.

"How many traps do you take along?"

"When I first went trapping I thought six or eight traps enough; but steel-traps are so much better, and more easily tended than wooden traps and dead-falls, that I now take 100 muskrat or mink traps—sometimes even 150—besides a few otter traps, and if I am going into a beaver country, a dozen beaver traps."

"But you can't take all these into the woods at once?"

"No; I first select my trapping-ground, and then "make a line," as trappers say; i. e., carry into the woods three or four back-loads of traps, and deposit them in safe places along the line on which I intend to trap, which sometimes extends from

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twenty to forty miles, from one stream to another, or from one lake to another."

"How many traps can one man tend?"

"That depends of course upon circumstances. Where game is plenty, 50 traps will keep you skinning and stretching; but in other places you might tend 150 or even 200 traps."

"How did you camp at night?"

"There is a good deal to be learned about camping out.—When I go into the woods to trap for any length of time I generally build a home-shanty of logs or bark. If I want to build one which will last three or four years, I make it of logs, notching or dovetailing the ends, and laying them up in block-house style, filling the cracks with moss, and making a roof of split cedar or bark. Sometimes I make a shanty by simply driving down two crotched sticks, placing a pole on them, and sticking down poles all around excepting in front, and covering them all over with spruce bark. When near the home-shanty I sleep there of course, but at other times I have no covering excepting a single blanket. I find a big log, and make my bed of boughs on that side of it least exposed to the wind. If the snow is deep, I select my camping-place on the hill-side, digging down to the ground to make a fire, and sleeping myself on the snow below, so that the blaze of the fire will shine directly upon me. When traveling by water I draw the boat on to the bank at night, partly turn it up, and sleep under it, building a fire a few feet distant in front. I generally have slept very soundly in the woods."

"I have kept you answering questions a long time; but I shall not leave fully satisfied unless you will give me an account of some interesting adventures, of which you must have had many in your half-century's hunting and trapping."

"My experiences have not been so thrilling as those related in many books; besides, I am a poor hand to tell stories."

"Tell him, father, how you once nearly froze to death," said his son John, always pleased to hear his father repeat his adventures.

"Well, then," replied Mr. Hutchins, who only waited for a little urging, "I will tell you of my

ADVENTURE ON THE DEAD RIVER.

"It must have taken place nearly forty years ago in the State of

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Maine. It was on my second long trapping-expedition. I went into the woods with one Capt. John Churchill—a great trapper and hunter. After we had killed nine moose, we concluded that one of us had better return home and notify our friends and neighbors that they could have plenty of moose meat by coming into the woods after it. And so I started home for that purpose. We were then on the head-waters of the Androscoggin, about thirty miles from the head-waters of the Dead river, where our home-shanty was. The plan was for me to follow our line of traps, taking along what fur I found, and skinning and stretching it at the home shanty, where I was to remain the first night. But instead of doing so, I thought on reaching the shanty, as the sun was still an hour and a half high, that I would leave the fur for Churchill to skin and go on several miles further. It was fifteen miles down the Dead river to Folsom's house, but I thought I could go about half way, to the place where Captain Churchill and I had camped, when we went into the woods. So I tramped on. It was one of the cold, sharp, biting days in February, and the wind blew and the snow flew awfully. I got to the shanty about dark, and carefully collected a pile of dry sticks for kindling, spread my blanket in the corner, and prepared to have a comfortable night of it. Then I went to my knapsack to get my flint and steel to light my fire with, but they were missing. I searched every corner in vain, and finally concluded that I had left them back in camp. By this time it was dark, and piercing cold, and I hardly knew what to do. It was too late to think of returning to the camp, and I knew I should freeze to death if I remained where I was. So, after thinking it all over, I concluded to go on to Folsom's. I thought if I could get to the river, the ice would be strong enough to hold me, and it would be easier traveling, and a straight road.

"Well, I took my knapsack and started. It was n't a great way to the river, and I soon got there and slid down the bank on to the ice. But the ice, it seems, was n't as strong as I had calculated, and so, instead of landing on solid bottom, I went straight through. I went in up to my neck, and saved myself by catching hold of an alder; but my knapsack, with my hatchet, snow-shoes, and twenty pounds of moose tallow, went to the bottom. I fished it up, though, with a hooked stick, and went

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on; but before I had gone twenty rods, my clothes were frozen stiff. I kept on for some distance further down stream, to where the river was not so rapid, and concluded to try the ice again. But I had no better luck than before. The ice gave way, and in I went again, just as I did before. I felt pretty bad, I can tell you, about that time; but I managed to get out and go on again. The walking was so hard that I could n't help trying the ice once more. I ought to have known better, or at least taken better care, after getting in twice, but somehow I did n't. I slid down on to the ice, and in an instant found myself in a little worse situation than I had been before. The ice was nearly, but not quite thick enough to bear me; and I was so far from shore this time that I could not pull myself out. I floundered about among the broken ice and water for quite a little while; lost my knapsack; but finally managed to swim ashore—not in very good trim for travel either, for the ice, which had frozen on my clothes during my three duckings, made them very stiff and heavy.

"In spite of all this I managed to get to Folsom's; but here I had another disappointment. No one was there, and the fire was all out. Of course I could not stop, in the condition I was in, as I should have frozen to death in half an hour. The nearest house was at Reed's, fifteen miles further down the river, and there was no other way for me but to get there as soon as possible.

"So I started down the river for Reed's. It was eleven or twelve o'clock at night, and I had a pretty hard time of it, but got there at last. Reed's house is on a hill; and when I got to the foot of that great hill I could'nt walk up it to save my life; I had to crawl up on my hands and knees. Finally I got to the house and rapped at the door, and Reed came and opened it. I suppose I did look rather forlorn;—at any rate, he seemed almost frightened at first. 'For God's sake, Hutchins, is this you?' —were the first words he said. I explained my circumstances to him, and he took me into the house, built up a big fire, and thawed me out, and then put me to bed where I slept till the next day at noon, and then got up, feeling as well as usual, only a little stiff.

"It was thirty miles from the place on the Androscoggin where I first started from, to our camp; fifteen miles from there to Folsom's; and fifteen miles from Folsom's to Reed's—in all sixty

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miles. I started from the Androscoggin at eight o'clock in the morning, and got to Reed's at half-past three the next morning, making the whole sixty miles in nineteen hours and a half.—I think if I had allowed myself to be frightened or disheartened, I should have gone under: but I kept up good heart, and came out all right."

A YOUNG TRAPPER'S EXPERIENCE.

BY JOHN P. HUTCHINS.*

My earliest recollections are of the forest. My father was an experienced hunter and trapper, and when I was but five years of age I accompanied him on one of his expeditions into the great Maine wilderness in search of game and fish. I have a dim recollection on that occasion, of hooking on to a very large fish, and of being unable, with my slender strength, to get him into the boat in which I was seated. This childish disappointment made quite an impression upon me, and I used anxiously to look forward to the time when I should be a match for any of the beasts of the woods, or the fish in the waters.

I was sufficiently old to endure the hardships of forest life, when my father took up his abode on the southern border of the great New York forest, sometimes called "John Brown's Tract." There we prosecuted the business of trapping in earnest. We stretched a line of traps nearly forty miles in length, directly into the heart of the wilderness, over rivers, mountains, lakes and plains; and along this line we diligently trapped the otter, fisher, marten, mink, muskrat and raccoon.

To give an idea of the management of a practical trapper in the woods, I will describe in detail the operations by which we subsisted, and took our game while in the woods.

As our line of traps was about forty miles in length, and of course involved a journey of eighty miles to and from our home, our outfit became at once a very important consideration. In the first place, we must have enough to eat, and the means

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wherewith to cook our food, and at the same time we must not overload ourselves with luggage; as every pound of our personal effects must be carried on our backs for long days, through a pathless wilderness. The object then was to secure the greatest amount of nutriment, with the least possible weight.

And then, not only food, but other absolute necessaries must be provided. We must have the means for procuring fire, for securing game and fish, for taking and disposing of our furs, for keeping warm on a cold night, &c.; all of which weigh down seriously, but can by no means be overlooked or omitted.

I may as well here remark, that about one-fifth of the luggage generally recommended by writers and book-makers who treat of life in the woods, as suitable for the hunter's or trapper's outfit, will cover all his absolute wants. The remaining four-fifths the old woodsman will consider as luxuries, if not superfluities. I suppose that, as a general thing, writers are not practical hunters or trappers, and this may account for the discrepancy I have mentioned.

A trapper makes great account of his fire. Aside from its primary use in cooking his food, it oftentimes supplies the place of house and bedding. Some carry with them a light woolen blanket, but oftener the woodsman has only the earth for his resting-place, and the heavens for his counterpane, a sheltered nook, where the wind cannot blow too rudely, a few hemlock boughs for his bed, and a fire just in proportion to the temperature of the season.

Aside from the necessary supply of traps, the trapper's outfit can be reduced to about the following items:

First. A basket or knapsack, to carry on his back, and large enough to hold provisions and other necessaries for the journey.

Second. Eatables, consisting principally, or wholly, of pork and flour; or, what is better on some accounts, a mixture of flour and Indian meal, in the proportion of two parts flour to one of meal. Add to this a littte saleratus and a small bag of salt, and a man can carry food sufficient, with what game and fish he can procure, to last him a month. It is much easier to carry the flour into the woods and bake it as it is wanted, than to attempt to use bread already baked, as it is lighter and less bulky. When the woodsman wishes for bread, he mixes the

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flour in a basin of warm water, adds a little saleratus and salt, and bakes it in his frying-pan, or if that is not at hand, on a chip.

Third. Cooking utensils, viz., a small frying-pan, two tin basins of the capacity of one and two quarts respectively, and a small tin cup for drinking.

Fourth. Implements for general use, viz., an axe, gun, knife and pocket-compass.

Lastly, and above all, a good supply of matches.

Every trapper should have a companion to assist him, as the same gun, ax and cooking utensils will suffice for both, and it is much less labor for two than for one to carry them.

When the business of trapping is prosecuted on the borders of lakes and large streams, much hard labor is saved by the use of a boat. Those who make free use of boats are more lavish in their outfit, as the labor of transportation is thereby very much reduced. I suspect that Mr. Newhouse has been more familiar with this method than myself; and this may account for any apparent discrepancy between us in respect to outfit.

When I began life as a trapper, I lived, as I have said, with my father, on the southern border of the great New York wilderness; so that our line of traps commenced not far from our home. This line was by degrees extended further and further into the forest, until it had reached the limit, beyond which the provisions we could carry would not hold out. We began by carrying our traps into the woods, and distributing them along our intended line before the trapping season began; so that when the time arrived that fur was suitable for market, we should have only to set our traps and bait them. At the proper season we would shoulder our packs, containing as much provision as we could comfortably carry, and commence carefully setting and baiting our traps. This process was continued as long as our provisions would allow, and then we would return on the same line, examining our traps, skinning the animals taken, and stretching their furs. After a short interval, this process was repeated, and kept up while the season lasted.

Our usual course was, to follow rivers and streams, and visit all the lakes in the vicinity of our line. When following streams, or the shores of the lakes, we would trap the beaver, otter, mink and muskrat; and when our line extended over land and

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away from the water, we took the marten, fisher, and raccoon.

Our methods of setting and baiting traps, and our contrivances for circumventing animals, were generally very much like those recommended by Mr. Newhouse, and need not be detailed.

In the course of my trapping experience I had considerable practice in taking the fisher, and became somewhat familiar with its ways. This is a very pretty creature, with glossy black fur, and a long bushy tail. But, like the cat, it has a temper that is not so mild and agreeable as its appearance might indicate; nor does the close embrace of one of Newhouse's traps tend to mollify it at all. It frequently makes sad havoc with the trap and its appurtenances, and sometimes gets away after being fairly caught. I well remember a trying experience I had with one of these animals in the North woods. I had seen his tracks, and had carefully set my trap with all the usual fixings and fastenings, in full faith in his ultimate capture. But on going to the place the next day, trap and chain were clean gone, and all fixings demolished. The fisher had been there, and had been caught, but instead of submitting handsomely to his fate, had gone and robbed me of a good Newhouse trap. (It was not Newhouse's fault.) He was a very large animal, and the spring-pole was not strong enough to swing him clear off the ground. So after demolishing the enclosure in which the trap was set, and making a general smash of things around, he threw himself upon the end of the pole, actually gnawed it off below where the ring was fastened, and left for parts unknown. How he finally disposed of the valuables he carried off, or whether he drew them about for the rest of his life, is left for conjecture.

I have long since abandoned the woods, and my trapper's life seems like a dream of the past; and yet I look back to it as a long and pleasant dream, despite of its many hardships and privations. In entering the woods I seemed to leave behind the jostlings and heartaches of crowded society—the great "*tom*" in which mankind are tumbling and chafing—and went forth into the freedom and peace of undisturbed Nature.

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THE DEER HUNT.

FROM SAMUEL S. HUTCHINS'* JOURNAL.

"Oct. 21, 1860.—We caught a deer to-day, and I am going to tell you all about it; for we had a lively time, I assure you.

It was one of those still, cloudy mornings you see so often at this time of year. We arose early, got our breakfast, did up our chores, and then started for the lake to hunt deer. We found the lake as calm and smooth as glass. Father took the large boat and went up to the head of the lake to start the dog, and I took the small boat and started down the lake for the "point," to watch for the deer. After getting there I climbed up into a tree, so that I could have a good view of the lake, and listened for the dog. After staying there some time, the wind began to rise, and I got cold, and began to think that we should hardly get a deer that day. So I came down out of the tree and went to stirring about to get warm, when I heard the dog away off on the hills. I stopped for a moment to see which way the chase was going, and came to the conclusion that they were coming around the head of the lake, and so on down to where I was. I then got up into the tree again, to await the result. I waited about an hour, I should think, watching the upper part of the lake most of the time, thinking the deer would be most likely to come in there. On looking, however, in the other direction, behold there was the deer, swimming for life. It was a buck, and a large one too. He was about half way across the lake, and half a mile from where I was. I did not stand there and look at him long, I reckon. Down I came, twenty feet at two jumps, hurting my shins most wofully on the limbs, and my nose on the stones where I landed; but I picked myself up and got into my boat.—Then commenced the chase. But let me describe the boat in which I was, so that you can better appreciate the fun. It is just eleven feet long, and sixteen inches wide, and scarcely heavier than an egg-shell, (poetic license), and will upset a great deal easier. It was made from a basswood log, and well

* This young man was a soldier in the late war, and came home from McClellan's peninsular campaign, with wounds and diseases that caused his death in the fall of 1864.

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made too, and is what is commonly called a "dug-out." I had to stand on my knees in the middle, and had a double paddle, that is just like a common one, only it has a blade on each end. Thus equipped I started the chase, with the wind in my favor, and with the firm intention of catching the buck if I possibly could. He was a good half mile ahead of me, and had not so far as that to go to get to shore; and I could see that he swam furiously. I had no weapons to slay him with. My duty was to get around him, and drive him up the lake to father, who, when he saw me start out, I expected would come and meet me and help kill him. So away I went, exerting every nerve and muscle; shot around the point, and was out at sea in "no time;" kept my eye on the deer, and took a course that would cut him off from the shore that he was swimming for. For a long while I went thus, with the wind in my favor, sometimes thinking that I should overhaul him, and then again that I should not. Finally I saw that I was gaining on him a little; but I knew that I must do more than that, if I wanted to catch him; so I redoubled my efforts. 'Pull, Sam!' I muttered, 'you must overhaul him, anyhow;' and so I did. After a long and hard pull I came up to him. When he saw me he turned square off from me, and swam almost as fast again as he did before. When I came about, side to the wind, to follow him, my little boat dipped water at every wave. But I stopped not for that. I wanted to run in beside him once more, and turn him toward the opposite shore; but I found that it was somewhat harder to do so than I expected. I laid out all my strength. You could have heard me puff half a mile off, if you had been within that distance. I could see that I gained on him, but very slowly. He sees that I am coming too near him, and he makes a short turn and swims for the middle of the lake, just where I wanted him to go, exactly! When I found he was safe, I dropped my paddle, and shouted lustily for joy. Father came in a few minutes, and dispatched him, but not without a desperate battle. He fired three charges of buckshot into his head, struck him more than forty blows with a hatchet, and only succeeded in killing him by getting hold of his legs separately, and hamstringing him, after which he could raise his head sufficiently to cut his throat. He was an old buck of the toughest kind, and weighed three hundred pounds.

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MUSKRAT HUNTING.

BY HENRY THACKER.*

In the winter of 1844–5, I made two or three excursions from the city of Chicago into the neighboring wild regions for the purpose of spearing and trapping muskrats. At this distance of time I shall hardly be able to give from memory a very accurate account of those excursions; but I enjoyed them so well and they made such vivid impressions on my mind, that I can at least give an outline of them, and shall recall as I proceed many interesting incidents.

The first thing I did, by way of preparation for the campaign, was to procure a suitable spear, which was simply a rod of round steel, three eighths of an inch in diameter, and three feet long, nicely pointed and polished at one end, and at the other driven firmly into a ferruled wooden handle, also about three feet long. The next thing (and a very important one) was to provide a pair of mufflers, made of old carpeting, to be drawn on over my boots. Lastly I harnessed myself into a knapsack suitable for carrying provisions, game, &c. Thus equipped I put on my skates one morning, as soon as I found the ice strong enough to bear me up, and started up the north branch of the Chicago river for Mud Lake —a small sheet of water about twelve miles distant, surrounded by of extensive marshes—a noted place, not only for the habitation the muskrat and mink, but for the gathering in the spring and fall of the year of multitudes of almost every variety of wild ducks, geese and other water-fowl.

Here let me describe the character and situation of this marsh and lake. The lake proper is a narrow sheet of water, from ten to twenty-five rods wide, and two or three miles in length. The water is from three to ten feet deep, and the soft mud at the bottom probably a great deal deeper. This lake seems to have two outlets flowing in opposite directions; one toward Chicago, being the principal headwaters of the south branch of the river which forms the harbor of Chicago; the other in the opposite direction,

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emptying into the Oplain river, which is among the head waters of the Illinois river. I was told that at the time of the high water in June of that year (1844), schooners from lake Michigan could easily have past through this lake and marsh, into the Oplain, and so down the Illinois river to the Mississippi.

But to return to my story: on arriving at the marsh, I found the ice strong enough to bear my weight, and quite transparent. A sight was here presented that I had never seen before. I cannot describe the view better, than by likening it to a large meadow covered with hay-cocks, so thickly was the marsh before me studded with muskrat houses.

These structures are built up of flag-tops, roots, mud and seaweed, or water-grass, to the hight and size of a hay-cock; and in them the muskrats live through the winter and spring. They generally commence their houses on a place where the water is one or two feet deep, and build it up entirely solid, to the hight of three to five feet above the water, cutting out channels, diverging in different directions from the house, and using the materials thus displaced, in strengthening the foundation of the house. These channels are used as run-ways by the rats, in going back and forth between the house and their feeding-beds, during winter. After the superstructure is finished, a hole is cut from underneath, up into the center of the house, forming a nest just above the water, leaving ample room for a second story in case of a flood.

I now made preparation to enter upon the business of my excursion—that of spearing muskrats. I was not long in putting on my mufflers and getting ready for the onslaught; and, as this was my first attempt at spearing, I was full of enthusiasm. With feelings of interest and excitement, I marched up to a large house very cautiously, (for, with the least jar or crack of the ice, away goes your game), and, with uplifted spear, made ready for a thrust. I hesitated. There was a difficulty I had not taken into account—I knew not where to strike. The chances of missing the game were apparent, but there was no time to be lost; so bang! went the spear into a hard, frozen mass, penetrating it not more than three or four inches, and away went the game in every direction. With feelings of some chagrin I withdrew my spear, and began feeling about for a more vulnerable spot, which

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I was not long in detecting. It being a cold, freezing day, I discovered an accumulation of white frost on a certain spot of the house, and putting my spear on the place, I found it readily entered. The mystery was solved at once; this frost on the outside of the house was caused by the breath and heat of the animals immediately beneath it, and it was generally on the south-east side of the center of the house, this being the warmest side. Acting on these discoveries, I made another trial, and was successful; and now the sport began in good earnest. Whenever I made a successful thrust, I would cut a hole through the wall of the house with my hatchet, and take out the game, close up the hole and start for another house. The remaining members of the family would soon return, and immediately set about repairing the breach. I sometimes succeeded in pinning two rats at one thrust. I also became quite expert in taking game in another way as follows: whenever I made an unsuccessful thrust into a house, the rats would dive into the water through their paths or run-ways, and disappear in all directions. I now found I could easily drive my one-tined spear through the ice two inches thick, and pin a rat with considerable certainty, which very much increased the sport, and I was not long in securing a pile of fifteen or twenty rats.

Here I made a discovery, of what until now, had been a mystery to me, viz., how a muskrat managed to remain so long a time in the water under the ice without drowning. The muskrat, I perceived, on leaving his house inhaled a full breath, and would then stay under water as long as he could without breathing; when he would rise up with his nose against the ice, and breathe out his breath, which seemed to displace the water, forming a bubble. I could distinctly see him breathe this bubble in and out several times, and then dive again. In this way, I have chased them about under the ice for some time before capturing them. I do not know how long the muskrat could live under the ice, but I have heard of their having been seen crossing large bays and rivers under the ice, five miles from shore. I saw a man in Illinois who told me he chased two otters under the ice for three-quarters of an hour, trying to kill them with his axe, and finally lost them; which goes to show that these animals, as well as the muskrat, can live under the ice a long time.

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As I frequently speared the muskrat on his feeding-bed, and subsequently found it to be the best and surest place to set a trap for him; I will, for the benefit of the novice, undertake to describe one as found in the marshes. A feeding-bed is a place where the muskrat goes to feed, generally at night, and is frequently many rods from his house. Here he selects a place where his food is convenient, and by the aid of the refuse material of the roots, &c., which he carries here for food, he elevates himself partly out of water, in a sort of hut. Here he sits and eats his food, and at the slightest noise, or least appearance of danger, disappears in an instant, under water. In the winter these feeding-places are readily discovered by a bunch of wadded grass, flag, or some other material, about the size of a man's hat, protruding above the ice. This little mound is hollow, and is only large enough for a single rat, where he sits and eats his food, with his lower parts in the water. When the rats were disturbed in their house, I found they generally fled to these feeding-huts, where they were almost a certain mark for the spearsman.

Finding I had taken as many rats as I could conveniently strip before they became frozen, I set about the work of skinning, and after an hour and a half of pretty cold work, I bagged my skins, put on my skates, and started for the city, well satisfied with my first day's excursion.

In my next excursion, not many days after, to the same place, I had still better success. As the ice had now become too thick to be easily penetrated by my spear, I adopted, in part, a different mode of taking my game. This time I carried with me, in addition to my spear, two dozen steel-traps, and a bundle of willow sticks (cut on the way) about three feet long. On arriving at the hunting grounds I prepared myself for the day's sport by putting on my mufflers, and with traps and willow sticks slung upon my back, began the work by driving my spear into the first house I came to. I could not now see the rats as they fled from the house, on account of the thickness of the ice and a slight snow that lay upon it. Consequently the sport of spearing them through the ice was cut off. But as often as I had occasion to cut through the walls of the house to take out my game, I set a steel-trap in the nest, slipped a willow stick through the ring of the chain, laid it across the hole, slightly stopped it up, and then passed on

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to the next house; and so on, until my traps were all gone. I then started back to the place of beginning, driving my spear into every feeding-hut in my course, and killing many rats. Finally, I began going over the ground again, first driving my spear into a house, then examining the trap, taking out the game, and re-setting the trap. In this course I was quite successful. I found by setting the trap in the right place, near the edge, and a little under the water, I was almost certain to take the first rat that returned. In making two or three rounds in this way, I found the rats became somewhat disturbed, and sought temporary shelter elsewhere; when I would move to a new place, giving them time to recover from their fright.

I think this a very profitable method of trapping the muskrat, especially in an open winter. It very much lengthens the season of trapping, which is quite an important consideration with the trapper. Another consideration is, the trapper may set his traps and allow them to remain many days, if not convenient to go to them, and be sure his fur will take no harm; as the rat on being caught in the trap dives into the water, and is soon drowned, and will not spoil for a long time at this season of the year, and is also secure from frost.

I will here state that I found a muskrat-house to contain from four to nine rats. I have caught as many as nine from one house. Possibly some may contain a greater number than this. I concluded that these colonies must be the progeny of a single rat in one season, or for aught I know, at a single litter.

In these winter excursions, I sometimes captured several minks, which I found somewhat different from the mink of the eastern states, being much larger, and of a lighter brown color and coarser fur. I sometimes found them occupying muskrat-houses, from which they had driven or destroyed the muskrats, the flesh of which they are very fond of. They are a gross-feeding, carnivorous animal. I have found stored up in muskrat-houses which they inhabited, from a peck to half a bushel of fish, in all stages of decay, and some freshly caught and alive; which is good evidence that they are not only gross feeders, but good fishers also. I was most successful in taking the mink in steel-traps, baiting with muskrat-flesh or fish, and setting my traps about the marshes, and along the banks of streams and rivers. A mink will seldom

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pass a bait without taking or smelling at it; and by placing the bait a little beyond the trap, in such a position that he must pass over the trap in order to reach it, you are pretty sure of him. I also caught them by setting the trap in the mouth of their dens and in hollow logs, and sometimes enjoyed the sport of digging them out of the river-bank.

In setting my traps for mink and raccoon, I was some annoyed by the prairie wolf taking the bait, but still more by the skunks getting into the traps. The country at this time abounded with these animals. They seemed to be nearly as plenty as the minks. I have sometimes found as many as two or three in my traps on a morning. It was an easy matter enough to dispatch one, but to do it and not get my trap scented was not so easy. (Here let me say, I never knew one caught in a trap to discharge at all, until disturbed by the approach of man.) After trying several unsuccessful plans, I hit upon one that I thought would do the business. Putting a tremendous charge of powder and ball into my rifle, I approached my antagonist as near as I could without drawing his fire; and placing the muzzle of my rifle within three feet of his head, blazed away, and blew his head clean off. I approached the carcass for the purpose of taking off my trap, (congratulating myself on my good success), when he made a sudden convulsive movement, and, Oh horror! such a discharge of the genuine article, no man ever saw or smelt! However, by a quick movement I escaped the charge myself, but my trap, as usual, was thoroughly perfumed. I soon had an opportunity to try again, and this time I succeeded, by the following device. Watching my opportunity when the skunk turned his eyes from me, I dealt him a heavy blow across the back with a long club, and immediately loosened the trap from off his leg. In this way I ever after managed to keep clear from scent, with a single exception, which occurred as follows:

In one of my excursions, accompanied by another person, the dog scented something under the floor of an old shanty, which we concluded must be a mink; so at it we went, tearing up the floor, to give the dog a chance to get at the animal. Up came one plank after another in quick succession, when all at once the dog made a tremendous lunge right into the midst of a nest of seven nearly full-grown skunks. In less than a minute the at-

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mosphere was blue with the most horrible stench ever encountered by human olfactories. The dog was soon nearly choked and blinded by the showers of stifling spray that met him at every charge, and, for the time being, all were obliged to beat a hasty retreat into the open air. But as we were all now fairly in for it, we concluded to make another charge and finish up the work we had so enthusiastically begun; and, armed each with a long club, we returned to the fray, and, with the help of the dog, soon despatched the foe, and retreated to the windward to get clear of the stench. But it was of no use. I seemed to be scented through and through; my very breath seemed to be hot with the terrible miasma; and for several days I could scarcely taste or smell anything but skunk. This was my most serious encounter with the skunk family, though I continued to be annoyed by their getting into my traps; and once, at the suggestion of a fur-dealer that their skins were worth fifty cents apiece, undertook the job of saving a lot; but after skinning five, gave up the business in disgust.

My next excursion was a short but rather exciting one. In consequence of a slight thaw a day or two previous to my setting out, the skating on the river was nearly spoiled. I was therefore obliged to travel most of the way on land, and on foot, taking nearly all day to get to my place of destination. I put up for the night at a tavern a mile or two from the part of the marsh where I intended to trap, which was at the end opposite to the theater of my previous excursions, and near the Oplain river. The next morning, after breakfast, I started out for the hunt, and, on arriving at the marsh, to my surprise not a muskrat-house could be seen, with the exception of the very tops of three or four. The rest were all under water and the water frozen over. At first I was unable to divine the cause of this unusual rise in the water; but subsequently ascertained that an ice-dam had formed in the river three-fourths of a mile below, in consequence of the breaking up of the ice above, and had set the water back over this part of the marsh to the depth of nearly four feet. The muskrats were completely drowned out; and I now saw them huddled together in numerous squads upon the newly-formed ice all over the marsh, having already brought up portions of their submerged dwellings, with which they had built up

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slight walls to shelter themselves from the cold north-west wind.

This was an exciting scene to the trapper—a multitude of his game in full view! I became almost nervous with excitement. But how to get at them was the question. On going down to the water, I found it scarcely frozen along the shore, though it looked firmer farther out. To be sure I could reach many of the muskrats with my rifle; but what was the use, if I could not get them after I had killed them? However, something must be done. I couldn't stand this sight anyhow. I set about devising some plan by which I might reach the game in person. A half-dozen plans were presented to my mind in as many minutes. One plan was to place a board on the ice, get on it, and shove myself along by placing the point of my sharp spear on the ice; but on further consideration, I concluded this would be too slow an operation. If I succeeded in getting out on the ice, the rats could easily keep out of my way, as I should not be able to leave my board. Another plan was to fasten a piece of board a foot square to each foot; but on further thought, this plan was also abandoned as being unsafe. Although the water did not exceed four feet in depth down to the old ice, yet in case I broke through, the boards might operate to keep my heels up and my head down. I now determined to test the real strength of the ice; and procuring a piece of slab, twelve or fourteen feet long, I shoved it off on the ice. Leaving one end resting on the shore and walking out on this, I stepped off upon the ice. It barely held my weight, and soon began to settle, so that the water came upon the ice. However, I came to the conclusion that if I could get upon the ice with my skates on and keep constantly under pretty good headway, it would hold me up. Stripping off all extra clothing, and laying aside every unnecessary weight, I strapped on my skates and, with spear in hand, launched forth in pursuit of the game. The ice bent and waved before me; but I glided swiftly on, and in less than a minute was among the muskrats.

I now discovered that the rats kept a hole open through the ice, right above their house; and before I got within striking distance, they dove into the water and disappeared. I could hear them snuffing up against the ice, but could not see them on account of a slight sprinkling of snow which covered the ice. As soon as I left for another place, they would come up again

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through the holes on the ice. I saw that in order to get a chance to strike them, I must wait at the holes for them to return for a fresh supply of air. This I found rather tedious, as I was obliged to keep constantly in motion, running in a circuit around the hole, on account of the weakness of the ice. In this way I would have to wait several minutes; and when one did return to breathe, he was so very quick I found it difficult to hit him; and I also found, where the holes were not a great way apart, that when I went to one hole the rats would dive and swim to another. This would not do. I must try another expedient; and returning to the shore, I took from my knapsack a dozen steel-traps and a handful of willow sticks, threw them on the ice, and then started back. Picking up, in my course, as many traps and sticks as I could carry without increasing my weight too much, I distributed them around the holes. And now lively work commenced. Taking a trap and stick in my hand, while under headway, I set the trap, slipped the willow stick through the ring of the chain, dropped it on the ice, placed the trap in the little cuddy where the rats huddled together, and passed on to the next without scarcely making a stop. This plan was a successful one. Frequently before I reached the next hole, a rat would be caught in the trap I had just left, and diving into the water, would be brought up at the length of the chain by the stick sliding across the hole, and in this condition would soon drown himself. I now had as much business as I could attend to, taking out the game, re-setting my dozen traps, carrying the game to the land, &c. You may be sure I played back and forth in a lively manner. I however discovered that the ice became much weakened by passing over it several times. Consequently I was under the necessity of moving to new places occasionally, to avoid breaking through. In fact I found there was only a small part of the marsh where the ice was sufficiently strong to hold me up at all; and the weather moderating after the middle of the day weakened the ice so much that I fell through several times, getting my clothes wet, and boots full of water; which so much increased my weight that I was soon obliged to abandon the field altogether. I had, however, by this time secured a good pile of rats, and on the whole, had had one of the most exciting day's sport I ever enjoyed.

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The weather now continued to moderate, and there were evident signs of the breaking up of winter, and the opening of spring. In two or three days from this time, wild ducks and geese began to gather about the marshes. I now began active preparations for a spring's campaign of trapping. During the winter two small trapping-boats had been made, and a tent, camp-kettles and other 'fixings' had been got in readiness; and on about the twentieth of February, in company with E——, I set out. We launched our little crafts and commenced the campaign by scattering over the marsh one hundred and ten steel-traps, with open jaws, ready for the fur-clad inhabitants. The weather being favorable and the water steady, we made havoc among the muskrats and minks; and as this was a noted place for game, especially for muskrat, mink and raccoon, we soon had competition in the business. In the course of three or four days, three other trappers stopped in the same vicinity, and commenced operations. But as they were strangers from a distance, we had decidedly the advantage, as we understood the ground, having previously pretty thoroughly reconnoitered the marshes in this section. The game being plenty, we found work enough to keep us busy, and for several succeeding days caught more rats than we could find time through the day to skin.

However, our good success was of comparatively short duration. In the course of ten or fifteen days, we found ourselves confronted by a pretty serious difficulty in the way of successful operations. As the previous summer had been remarkable for its long continuous rains and great flood, we now had the opposite state of things—continuous dry weather; and having had scarcely any rain the fall previous, nor snow during the winter, spring found the water in the rivers and marshes unusually low. As the weather continued fair, the March winds dried up the marshes so fast, that we soon found it difficult to get around with our boats, and finally were obliged to leave them altogether and take to the rivers, in order to continue our sport. We now found our chance for sport much reduced. The high water the previous spring and summer, overflowing the river-banks for so long a time, either prevented the rats breeding, or drowned their young, so that we found the game rather scarce. We however ascended the Oplain river some twenty or thirty miles. Our way was to

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string our traps along the banks, three or four miles at a setting, and then return to camp. The next day we would overhaul and re-set, if we found the game plenty enough to warrant it. If not, we would take up the traps and make another stretch, and so on.

On returning several days subsequently to our old hunting-grounds, we found the muskrats had somewhat recovered from the fright we had given them by our sudden and terrible onslaught, and had returned from the inaccessible parts of the marsh to which they had fled for refuge, and we made several more successful sets.

The weather had now become mild, and the marshes literally swarmed with ducks and geese and other water-fowl. Any one not familiar with this section of country can have no idea of the numbers of water-fowl that gather about these lakes and marshes in the spring and fall of the year. As we moved about in our little boats among the tall reeds and flags of the marsh, our fire-arms were always at hand, ready to bring down a duck or a goose that happened to pass within reach. We fared sumptuously every day. Our daily bill of fare consisted of roast goose, roast duck, prairie chicken, plover, pike, bass, cat-fish, bull-heads, &c., &c., together with coffee, hard biscuit, butter, and occasionally a meal of duck and goose eggs. This was what we called high living; and as we seldom found time for more than two meals a day, we were prepared to dispatch them with a relish that no one but a trapper can realize.

E—— did not seem to enter into the business with as much enthusiasm as myself, and having a family in the city, frequently found occasion to go home, and sometimes staid away two or three days. This made the work not quite so pleasant for me, as I enjoyed the sport much better when we were together. However, I got along very well; and the croaking of the frogs, the peeping of lizards, quacking of ducks or geese, crowing of prairie chickens, the loud cries of the great sand-hill cranes, and the almost incessant howling and yelping of the prairie wolves, were all music to my ears. On the whole, I enjoyed the situation exceedingly.

One day as I was pushing my little boat along through the tall reeds, I saw at a distance something unusual on the top of a muskrat-house. As it was lying flat, almost hidden from view, I

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at first sight took it to be an otter, as we had killed one some time previous near the same place. As usual at the sight of game, my rifle was quick as thought brought to bear, and away sped the bullet, and over tumbled a large wild goose, making a great splashing as she fell into the water. On examination I found she had a nest of seven eggs, all fresh. The goose weighed fourteen pounds and a half. The same day I found another nest with several eggs, and took them to a farmer who was anxious to get them to hatch "at the halves." He placed the eggs under a hen; but a few days before they were ready to hatch, my ever-present enemy, the skunk, ate up hen, eggs and all, to the great sorrow and indignation of the farmer. He said the young geese would have been worth five dollars a pair.

The weather still continued dry, and as we did not find game very plenty in the rivers, we concluded to wind up the trapping business, after having spent about six weeks in steady employment. We now collected our furs, and found we had caught seven hundred muskrats, sixty minks, a number of raccoons, and one otter; for which we found a ready market at good prices. Thus ended my first, and most interesting trapping campaign.

AN AMATEUR IN THE NORTH WOODS.

BY CHARLES S. JOSLYN.*

It was a pleasant June evening when I first approached the southern boundary of the great New York wilderness. I had been an amateur sportsman from my earliest youth; and my fondness for the woods was, and has always been, quite inexpugnable. My feelings, therefore, when I came in full view of the long, dark line of primitive forest in the distance, were so exhilarating as to require some vent.

"Farewell, vain world!" said I, unconsciously breaking into a sort of monologue; "adieu to the pomp and glitter and artificiali-

* A member of the Oneida Community.

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ty of the thing they call society! Welcome, nature, pure and unadulterated, fresh from the hand of the Creator! I salute thee, O forest, with reverence: yea, I bow mine head with veneration before thy hoary antiquity!"

I was here interrupted by a smothered laugh from my companion, who had overheard the close of this rhapsody, which, in the exuberance of my feelings, I had uttered in a more elevated tone. S—— N—— was a practised woodsman, keen and shrewd, and well versed in the lore of the forest, but without an atom of imagination or poetry in his composition.

"Wait awhile," said he, in his peculiar, dry way. "Save your speeches till your return. Perhaps experience will modify your fine feelings. Besides, as it is now nearly dark, and it is yet some distance to the woods, we shall have to be still further obligated to civilization for a night's resting-place."

The force of the latter consideration was quite irresistible, and had the immediate effect to postpone my enthusiasm for the time.

It was after nightfall, when we succeeded in obtaining a lodging in the loft of a dilapidated farm-house, whose owner reluctantly consented to receive us. The accommodations were none of the choicest, and, accustomed as I was to clean sheets, soft beds, and other amenities of civilization, the general slovenliness of our dormitory, and the unyielding nature of our couch, were not at all conducive to repose. N——, however, manifested an exemplary stoicism, and consoled me with the assurance that this was but a foretaste of what was in store for us.

The meagre amount of sleep which I enjoyed, and the general uncomfortableness of my surroundings, were favorable to early rising; and so we began our march soon after daylight the next morning. Our baggage had been sent ahead on horseback, so that we had but our guns to carry; and in the freshness of early morning, the hour's walk which brought us to the border of the woods seemed a brief one. A fence built directly across our path announced that we had reached the verge of civilization; and climbing this, in another moment we were within the precincts of the forest.

My first sensation was that of sublimity. An intense thrill of delight pervaded my whole being, and I almost involun-

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tarily commenced repeating the opening stanzas of "Evangeline:"

"This is the forest primeval," &c.

My second sensation, which almost instantly dissipated the first, was that of mosquitoes—not the comparatively mild and inoffensive insect of polite society, but the savage and blood-thirsty vampire of the North Woods. Most of us have had experience with mosquitoes, and are more or less acquainted with the nature of the insect; but the mosquito of civilization no more resembles the mosquito of John Brown's Tract, than the bear trained to waltz to the music of the hurdy-gurdy, resembles the untamed grizzly of the Sierra Nevada.

At first the infliction seemed intolerable. The air was filled with these ferocious insects, who behaved as if they had had nothing to eat for a month, and were now determined to make up for all deficiencies. The air was fairly alive with them, and I was soon engaged in a regular battle with my antagonists, in which, owing to the great disparity of numbers, I seemed likely to get the worst of it. I fought manfully, but in vain. The odds were too overwhelming. Seeing myself thus outnumbered, and in danger of a wholesale defeat, and thinking the occasion deserved commemoration, as well as some other events which have been more written and talked about, I began to compose the following strikingly original poem, in which the reader may trace a slight resemblance to a certain lyric which was written by a distinguished poet a few years ago, in memory of a somewhat similar event:

Mosquitoes to right of us:
Mosquitoes to left of us;
Mosquitoes in front of us,
Blustered and buzzed.

Here they became so thick as to absolutely destroy my poetical afflatus; and I was obliged to look around for a protection against their attacks.

Fortunately, or rather, thanks to the providence of my companion, this was at hand. Mosquitoes have an invincible repugnance to certain vegetable scents, the chief among which is, perhaps, that of pennyroyal. To prepare it for use, it is necessary to melt a certain quantity of lard, and add to it in its liquid state, enough of the essence to infuse the mass with a strong scent. This compound, when cool, may be carried in the pocket in a tin box, and

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is an effectual preventive against the attacks of nearly every kind of insect peculiar to the American woods.

With this composition I plentifully anointed every visible portion of my body. Face, hands, ears, neck, every inch of surface which was liable to attack, was thoroughly lubricated, till I looked like an Esquimaux just arisen from his dinner of seal's blubber and train oil. The remedy, however, was effectual. It afforded me infinite satisfaction to see the impotent rage with which my late tormentors whirled round and round my head, in bewildering circles, never daring, however, to approach within reach of the aroma of this potent ointment. I anointed my face and neck twice or thrice a day, and found the application sufficient. The hands, owing to the necessity of use, require to be anointed about once an hour, to render them absolutely invulnerable. I found this somewhat tiresome, and subsequently adopted a pair of light buckskin gloves, which were not burdensome, and proved entirely mosquito proof.

In one of my excursions I met a young man who had incautiously ventured into the woods without adequate protection against mosquitoes. The blood was streaming from his face, where he had been bitten, and his general aspect was so forlorn that I was moved to pity. I gave him some ointment, with directions how to use it, and left him. When I met him a few hours afterward, his first salutation was: "By golly, Mister, you've saved my life." The backwoodsmen become so accustomed to these insects, that they pay but little attention to them, in most cases using no defense against them. It is said that a mosquito will not bite an old hunter; and it is certain that after one has been in the woods a short time, these insects will pay much less attention to him than to a new comer.

Mosquitoes however are not the only troublesome insect in the woods. A small, black gnat, which the old inhabitants term a "punkey," bears away the palm from the mosquito. As these insects are only about one-fourth as large as mosquitoes, they can penetrate the meshes of any mosquito-net; and when once they get scent of you, they will leave no portion of your body unexplored. The bite of these gnats is much worse than that of the mosquito. If you are bitten by the latter insect, and you do not unnecessarily irritate the wound, the effect is not visible for any

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great length of time afterward; but the bite of these gnats results, first, in a deep crimson blotch about the size and shape of a half-dime, and then in an open sore, which in some cases will last for weeks. The favorite method of protection against these insects, in use in the North Woods, is, to build a fire with some damp material which will produce a dense smoke, plant yourself resolutely where the smoke is thickest, and take your chance of being smothered, as a choice of evils. Neither mosquitoes nor gnats can endure smoke; and this fact is taken advantage of by families living near the edge of the forest, who, during warm weather, keep a pan of embers continually smouldering at the doors of their houses, by way of self-defense.

Eight or ten minutes of brisk walking brought us to a small clearing, wherein an enterprising pioneer had constructed a rough dwelling, and ministered thence to the wants and necessities of incoming and outgoing travelers. The principal of these wants, I soon found, was whiskey. It is difficult for me to do adequate justice to this beverage. I am undecided, to this day, which of these two characteristic institutions of the North Woods is the worst, the whiskey or the mosquitoes. The rule is, I believe, that any one who can drink the whiskey, can endure the mosquitoes; and, *vice versa*, any one who can endure the mosquitoes can drink the whiskey. Nevertheless, the article is in great demand, and indeed it seemed to be the common understanding that it was well-nigh impossible to undergo a two or three weeks' campaign in the woods without it.

My first acquaintance with the John Brown's Tract whiskey was on this wise: Stepping into the door of the rude dwelling I have mentioned, the first object which attracted my attention was a sort of bar in a corner of the room, with two or three pewter mugs on a rack at one end, and a large stone-jug on the floor in the rear. While I was speculating upon the meaning of this arrangement, N—— inquired if I would like a glass of whiskey. Curiosity overcame my discretion, and I replied in the affirmative. Whereupon the landlord stepped behind the bar, and poured from the stone-jug aforesaid into one of the pewter mugs, about a gill of a reddish-yellow fluid. I lifted the cup to my lips in all confidence, and imbibed a generous mouthful of the fiery liquid, but in another instant ejected it point-blank upon

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the cabin floor. I might as well have attempted to drink so much aqua fortis. N—— laughed, and the proprietor, with a grim smile, muttered something about my not being "used to the stuff," which was emphatically true. I am quite sure that a considerable portion of the mucous membrane of my mouth and throat was sore for a full day subsequent to this experiment; yet the natives of this region drink the undiluted whiskey like water, and seem to derive much comfort therefrom.

It was eleven miles, said our informants, to our next stopping-place; and on we pushed, full of courageous intent, and bidding defiance to the perils and hardships of the wilderness. But the miles were unconscionably long. I had prided myself somewhat on my ability as a pedestrian, and had thought lightly of the eleven miles before us; but by the time we had accomplished the half of them, it seemed to me that each mile was a league in length. And then the path—how shall I describe it? I had thought the road by which we had reached the clearing in our rear, as bad as road could be; but this path which we were now following, was yet worse. If the reader will imagine an almost unlimited amount of logs, rocks, mud, stumps and mosquitoes, mixed together haphazard, and distributed miscellaneously along a line eleven miles in length, he will by this means obtain a possible conception of the way in which we were wending.

I was well nigh exhausted, and we had yet several miles before us. I plodded wearily along, when I was aroused by a sound as of jubilation and rejoicing—an Io pæan—uttered in tones which might have proceeded from the lungs of an Antæus. I turned, and looking behind me, beheld, threading the narrrow vista formed by the trunks of the huge trees through which the path wound, a rubicund personage, mounted upon a pack-horse, with a capacious earthen jug pendant from his saddle-bow, and hallooing at the top of his voice. He ceased his vocal exercises on perceiving me, and, riding up to where I stood, meekly waiting for him to pass, without uttering a syllable unslung the jug and handed it to me.

"What is it?" I asked; for, tired and thirsty though I was, I was unwilling to run the risk of a second dose of John Brown's Tract whisky.

"Gin cocktail," was his terse reply.

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Although a person of strictly temperate habits, I lost no time in placing the jug to my lips, and drinking therefrom the sweetest draught which had ever moistened my thirsty palate. I had barely time to thank my benefactor before he disappeared from my sight among the trees. I have never seen him since, but shall always cherish a grateful remembrance for his timely succor, which so refreshed me that I was enabled to complete the day's journey with comparatively little fatigue.

Thanks to a good bed, and a sound night's sleep, I rose on the ensuing morning, with no diminution of spirits, and with my physical condition quite unimpaired. A little stiffness in the joints of the hips and knees, was all the trace which remained of my yesterday's fatigue; and even that wore away with the first hour's exercise.

At the outlet of the long chain of lakes which stretch far into the heart of this region, we were obliged to wait a few hours for the arrival of the boat which we had engaged, and which was absent on the upper lakes. The time of our delay was profitably employed in taking a fine string of speckled trout from the stream, which here debouches from the lower extremity of the lake.

The trout is an aristocrat among fish. Commend me to angling for trout, before any other species of fishing with which I am acquainted. You drop your bait into the water, and it is seized in such a hearty and whole-souled way, as to excite your sympathy for your victim. No timid, feeble nibbler is the trout; all his movements are straightforward and energetic. If he wants your bait, he will take it at once, and without urging. If not, no amount of coaxing can tempt him. There are few sensations in nature more satisfactory than the gentle titillation of the wrist and elbow, ensuing from the bite of a fine trout; and when the struggle is over and you have him safe in your basket, though you are not indued with the poetic temperment, and may not have an atom of sentiment in your organization, you can hardly suppress a sensation of regret at having destroyed a creature of such rare beauty.

So at least, I think, as I fill my basket; but N——, I am sorry to say, does not share in my weakness. His alimentive instincts are stronger than his idealic; and while I am half disposed to

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sentimentalize over our prey, he extricates a frying-pan from our luggage, and soon tempts my olfactories with a savory odor, of which, sooth to say, with my appetite sharpened by exercise and abstinence, I am in no wise unappreciative.

By the time we had finished our repast, our boat had arrived; and after securely packing our luggage in the bow and stern, and under the seats, we pushed off from shore, and directed our course toward the upper lakes.

The lakes of the North Woods form a peculiar feature of the region. A chain of small and picturesque sheets of water, eight in number, and connected with each other by shallow channels, extends far into the interior of the wilderness. These lakes are invaluable in the facilities they afford to hunters and trappers and others, wishing to penetrate the heart of the tract; as the transportation of one's self and baggage is rendered comparatively easy, by means of boats. Adventurers in this region can procure a boat at the outlet of the lower lake, and journey upward at their leisure till they find a suitable place for a camp. Those who have walked from the outside world to the landing, will appreciate the value of this arrangement, especially if they have transported their baggage thither on their own shoulders.

The day was drawing to a close, when we turned the bow of our boat to the shore, and landed near the foot of Lake No. 4, of the series. In our search after a proper location for our camp, we were so fortunate as to find an unoccupied "shanty" of the first quality, of which we lost no time in taking possession.

A "shanty" proper, is an institution peculiar to the woods. The most common variety, which the woodsmen erect for temporary use, is made of spruce bark, carefully peeled, so as to preserve the full width, and opened flat like a mammoth shingle. A low framework of poles is then constructed, and this bark is so disposed thereupon, as to form a dwelling which is nearly impervious to rain. One side of the edifice, however, is always left open, and in front of this the fire is built, which serves to warm the occupants in cool weather. The more aspiring style of shanty, to which ours belonged, is built of spruce logs, halved together at the ends, like a log house; the interstices filled with clay or moss, and the roof covered with bark, or split logs. These are intended for more permanent use, and are built

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by those who regularly frequent certain localities in the woods.

Night drew on apace. We had barely time to settle ourselves in our new habitation, build our fire and eat our supper, before darkness overtook us, and we prepared for bed. Our couch was of the most primitive character. A pile of green hemlock boughs, laid upon the bare earth, constituted both bed and bed-stead, sheets and coverlets. The only addition to the rather meager simplicity of this arrangement, was, a light woolen blanket, for use in an unusually cool night. N——, indeed, had provided himself with an enormous bag—a sort of *cul de sac* of Canton flannel, into which he crept at night, very much as a woodchuck ensconces himself in his hole. But I disdained all such artificial appliances. Having turned woodsman, I resolved to make a clean thing of it; and throwing myself upon my rude couch, with a bag of Indian meal for a pillow, in five minutes I was sleeping as sound as though reposing on the downiest of beds, and with the softest of pillows.

My repose, however, was not destined to be uninterrupted. At midnight the chilliness of the air awoke me. I drew my blanket closer around me, and tried to compose myself to sleep, but in vain. The more I wooed the coy nymph, the farther she seemed from my grasp, until at length I resigned the pursuit in despair. The novelty of my situation, and the unusual sounds which attracted my attention, were not at all favorable to slumber. I could hear the distant howling of wolves on the sides of the hill, at the foot of which we were encamped. Then, as I listened, I heard the underbrush crackle, and heavy footsteps tramped through the thicket but a few feet from my head, in the rear of the hut. What was it? A bear? or panther? or wolf? All these animals abound in the North Woods, and the tread was too heavy to have been made by a beast of less magnitude. I reached for my rifle, which stood at my head, and peered steadfastly out into the darkness, but could distinguish nothing. Meanwhile the footsteps had died away in the distance, and my nocturnal visitant had retreated, without deigning to reveal himself. Having by this time become pretty thoroughly awakened, I sprang up, raked together the decaying embers of our last night's fire, piled on a quantity of brush and logs, which created a genial blaze, warming every corner of our rude habit-

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ation; then, enveloping myself in my blanket, I slept soundly till awakened by the first beams of the morning sun. Such was my first night in the woods.

The days passed pleasantly in this sylvan retreat. When we were tired of our locality, it was a comparatively easy operation to effect a change of base. The old proverb that "three removes are as bad as a fire," we entirely disproved. A half hour at any time sufficed to transfer our effects from our habitation to our boat, and another half hour was amply sufficient to establish our *cuisine* and lodging in any locality to which we chose to migrate. Space and time would fail me were I to attempt to describe in detail our multifarious adventures in search of game and trout; how I rowed up and down the lakes trolling for salmon-trout, till the four broad blisters on my right palm, and the three ditto on my left, rendered ample testimony to my proficiency as an oarsman; and how at last, at the close of one pleasant day, we found ourselves securely encamped on a rocky peninsula extending for a mile or two out into the clear waters of Moose Lake.

Moose Lake is an isolated, but beautiful sheet of water, lying a mile or two aside from the chain of lakes on which we had hitherto been located. This lake is famed for the abundance and superior quality of its trout; and I was not slow in testing the validity of its reputation in this respect, by catching a fine mess of speckled trout for breakfast on the morning after our arrival, before N—— had emerged from his bag of Canton-flannel. But as salmon and not speckled trout were the principal objects of our labors, we prepared at once for taking them scientifically. And lest there should be some among my readers who do not clearly apprehend the distinction between the two, I will devote a paragraph or two to their enlightenment.

So few are unacquainted with the common brook, or speckled trout, that any description of this superb fish will perhaps be superfluous. The salmon-trout (*salmo trutta* of the ichthyologists) is a somewhat inferior fish, and does not legitimately belong to the genus trout. Indeed he might with equal propriety be called by any other name, as the only points of close resemblance between him and the trout proper, are, the extreme minuteness of his scales, and the spots on his sides; the latter of which resemble quite as nearly the spots of a pickerel as those of a trout.

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The salmon differs from the speckled trout in being more slender in form, and lighter-colored; his flesh rarely assuming so deep and rich a hue as that of the latter, and his spots being more dull and lifeless. The still, deep water of these wild lakes is his favorite habitat, and there he often grows to the weight of forty or fifty pounds. The speckled trout, on the contrary, is rarely found in water of any considerable depth; and though I once caught one of about four pounds' weight in forty feet depth of water, I have never known of a similar instance. But the salmon trout are seldom found in very shallow water; a depth of from twenty to fifty feet being necessary for the most successful fishing. The bite of the salmon, too, is materially different from that of the speckled trout. The latter announces his presence by a sharp, eager nibble; while the salmon bites with a sullen, dogged jerk, very much like a perch, cat-fish, or Oswego bass. His bite, however, is very sure, and a practiced fisherman will seldom lose the fish that once takes his bait.

The most effective method of capturing the salmon trout with a hook, is, to station a number of buoys in eligible localities, and, previous to fishing, bait them liberally with small fish chopped into pieces as large as the end of one's finger. The salmon, having obtained a taste of the bait, will haunt the place for days afterward; and by baiting the buoys two or three times a day, the fisherman will often obtain six or eight fish from a buoy at a single visit, weighing from one to five pounds each. If small fish for bait are scarce, as is often the case, the buoys can be baited with the inwards of the trout themselves, cut into small pieces with a hatchet on the bottom of the boat.

One pound is about the minimum size of the salmon trout as they are taken in the northern lakes; and very few smaller are caught. When it is taken into consideration that a single person can manage ten or twelve buoys with a good degree of success, it will be seen that this method of fishing can easily be made profitable as well as pleasurable, to those who are disposed to turn it to account in that way.

Great care is requisite in landing the salmon trout, or he will break loose from the hook between the water and the boat. From the moment the fish is hooked the line should be kept tight, or he will disengage himself. Pull in your line as rapidly

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as possible, and your prize will run directly to the surface; and then by taking a dexterous advantage of his momentum, and keeping him carefully clear of the side of the boat, you can throw him clean over, on to the bottom, with very little outlay of physical force. When captured, insert the sharp point of a knife into the back at the spot where the head joins the body, and he will neither disturb your temper nor entangle your lines by unnecessary floundering. Some amateurs make use of a landing-net; but the practised sportsman will pronounce this a superfluity.

The recollection of the time passed amid the still loneliness of this beautiful lake, will long remain a bright spot in my memory. The passing glimpse of a deer on the distant brink, sipping the clear water in safety, far out of rifle-shot: the occasional shooting of a gull, or loon, whose unearthly cry at dusk is forcibly suggestive of a monster, not less formidable than a bear, or panther: the daily exercise of trout-catching: unlimited rations of trout in every possible shape, trout salmon and trout speckled, trout large and trout small, trout boiled, trout roasted, and trout fried: such is a brief epitome of my life at Moose Lake.

But this wild existence, however pleasurable, was transitory. Duty recalled me to the world, with a voice too imperative to be disobeyed; and accordingly, having resolved to commence our return journey on the morrow, my companion and I began to pack our baggage in readiness for an early start. How to reduce our effects to light marching order, was something of a problem; and while N—— was trying to solve the vexed question, I volunteered to "wash the dishes." Our table service was as follows: One camp kettle, capacity four quarts, serving the purpose of hot water boiler, stew-pot, oven, &c.; two tin table plates; two tin pint basins; two pairs knives and forks; and two iron table spoons, besides our indispensability, the frying-pan. These I deposited on the shore of the lake, and making an extempore dish-cloth from a rag which I found among our luggage, I commenced my work. I began with the frying-pan, as being entitled to the most labor, and scrubbed vigorously for what I considered a suitable length of time; but for some reason failed to make very sensible progress. The grease adhered pertinaciously; and the harder I rubbed, the worse it looked.

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I then bethought myself of commencing with something which would afford an easier task; so I threw aside the frying-pan, and took up one of the tin plates. But here again I experienced a similar difficulty. Rub as hard as I would, the grease obstinately refused to yield to my efforts. By this time I had begun to think there was something wrong in my way of going to work; so I ceased manipulation and fell to speculating on the probable cause of my defeat. I had not studied the matter a great while, when it occurred to me that the attempt to wash a greasy dish without either soap or hot water, was not an altogether sagacious method of procedure. Having remedied this fundamental error, I experienced no further difficulty; and even congratulated myself on making the discovery unaided. I omitted, however, to mention the circumstance to my companion, partly because my feelings on this point were tender, but mainly because I wished to avoid tempting him into the vice of ridicule, a weakness in which he is at times prone to indulge. He subsequently heard, however, the story of my dish-washing, and to this day cannot resist the temptation to start a laugh over it at my expense.

By daylight on the following morning we were en route for home. We had selected and packed for preservation about forty pounds of our choicest fish, and left behind us everything not needed on our return journey. A few hours of rowing brought us to the landing, where we we bade farewell to our boat, which had stood us in such good stead. We were now dependant solely on our legs for the transportation of ourselves and effects back to civilization, and we braced ourselves manfully for the task.

As it fell to my lot to carry the said forty pounds of trout, I heroically shouldered my burden, and started in a homeward direction. It was now two o'clock P. M., and before we could reach a resting-place, we must traverse those eleven miles of forest which proved so interminably long on our way hither. Certain ominous doubts as to my ability to accomplish the task were carefully thrust aside as irrelevant and not to be entertained.

The sensation, to one who has never before had a load on his shoulders, of a pack of forty pounds' weight placed thereon, is anything but comfortable; and still less so was the prospect of carrying such a burden over the long and difficult path

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which lay before me. But circumstances were inexorable—the cross must be borne, and bear it I did, as the sequel will show. By dint of occasionally shifting my load from one point to another on my back, I traversed the first two or three miles very comfortably. I even began to be jubilant over my supposed capacity as a beast of burden. How great, thought I, will be the shame and confusion of W——, and T——, and H——, (who had striven to cast discredit on my backwoodsmanship) when I relate to them in full conclave, my triumphant exodus from the wilderness! What, after all, was there in the crossing of the Alps by Napoleon, or Hannibal—the passage of the Splugen by Macdonald, or the Rocky Mountains by Fremont—the scaling of the Heights of Abraham by Wolfe—the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, or any of those achievements about which history makes such an ado,—what is there in all these that evinces a greater supremacy of mind over matter, than this march of mine from solitude to civilization with forty pounds of salmon-trout on my back? The greatest deeds are not those which fame trumpets to posterity. "Full many a flower is born to blush unseen," &c.

But alas for poor, fallible human nature! The spirit indeed was willing, but the flesh seemed likely to prove a failure. At the close of the fifth mile I felt desperately tired and uncomfortable. Sombre thoughts began to creep over me. What if, after all, my enterprise should not prove a triumph? What if it should result in an ignominious defeat? What if darkness should overtake me, and I should be left exhausted in the forest, a prey to wild beasts? What if the next traveler should find my bones by the wayside, picked clean by remorseless wolves? And, as if to give force to the suggestion, N——, who was a short distance in the rear, shouted, "A wolf! a wolf!" My sporting instincts at once prevailed over my fatigue; and, cocking my rifle, I rushed into the bushes in the direction indicated, just in time to hear the retreating footsteps of the animal dying away among the underbrush. Pursuit was hopeless; but the excitement of the affair revived my drooping energy, and for a short time I trod the lonesome path more lightly.

But this factitious strength was only temporary, and I was soon more tired than ever. So utterly demoralized did I become, that the sight of a noble buck standing directly in my

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path, but a few paces distant, and gazing at me with his large, lustrous, startled eyes, brimfull of wonder, failed to arouse me in the least; and I allowed him to walk leisurely away, unmolested. The only desire of which I was conscious, was, an irrepressible longing for shelter and repose, neither of which were near at hand.

It was now nearly dark, and I had yet several miles to travel. N—— had loitered a mile or two behind, and I was quite alone. I had long desired to be in the wilderness at night, far from any human being, for the purpose of testing my strength of nerve. I had been curious to know what would be the effect upon me of such a situation, and whether my ordinary equanimity would be in any way disturbed by it. Here was an admirable opportunity to have this question definitively settled; but unfortunately, I was too tired to indulge in self-examination or thought of any kind; and so allowed the occasion to pass unimproved. About this time, a heavy thunder-cloud, which for some time had been sending forth ominous mutterings, began to discharge its damp contents upon my devoted head. But I was so insufferably weary, as to be entirely oblivious of rain, or thought of personal danger. The not unfrequent intimation of the close proximity of some wild beast, caused me no uneasiness, and I could have faced all the animals in the North Woods, *en masse*, with the most perfect imperturbability. I thought of heaven as a place of rest, and wished I was safely there. I thought of the rude log hut I had left that morning, and my bed of hemlock boughs, with sensations similar to those with which Adam must have contemplated his lost Paradise. The forty pounds of salmon-trout on my shoulders, weighed down more heavily than the rocks with which Dante has loaded some of his unfortunate sinners in purgatory. And so I fared slowly on, stopping once in thirty or forty rods to rest, half inclined to throw away my gun and burden, and yet impelled to their preservation by a sort of native tenacity which was unwilling to relax any part of my programme.

By this time it was so dark that eyes were a superfluity. The only method by which I could keep my path, was, to be sure that I was safe in the mud. If, at any time, I chanced to set foot on dry land, I concluded at once, that I had lost the road; and my progress could only be resumed by groping about until my

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path was once more wet and miry. I sometimes wonder how I ever succeded in working my way through such a labyrinth of difficulties; and have gratefully attributed it to the assistance of my guardian angel, who must have been sensible that I was very much in need of his aid.

As all things terrestrial, however, whether good or evil, must at length come to an end, so in due time came the termination of my toilsome journey. After a period which then seemed a great many hours in length, but which a cool retrospect convinces me must have been a much shorter period of time, I staggered out of the woods, and sunk exhausted on the bank of Moose River. It is my firm conviction that if my life had been at stake, I could not have walked another mile. So I lifted up my voice, and shouted vigorously for the ferryman on the opposite side of the river, but I received no reply. It was late at night, and he was doubtless sound asleep long ere this. Then I essayed to awaken him by discharging my rifle; but on snapping the locks of each barrel, I found that the rain which was still falling liberally, had so dampened the priming as to make the attempt abortive. I crawled under the shelter of a large hemlock, and finally, after much awkward fumbling in the darkness, succeeded in re-capping my rifle, and in pricking some dry powder into the tubes. This being accomplished I succeeded in discharging both barrels, and was gratified to hear an answering shout in return. In due time a boat appeared, and I was speedily transferred to comparatively comfortable quarters, where rest and shelter awaited me.

A more forlorn object than myself, as I emerged from the woods on that memorable occasion, it would be difficult to conceive of. Mud, rain, mosquitoes, and underbrush had so thoroughly disguised me that it would have required an intimate acquaintance to have recognized a familiar feature; and as my powers of description are limited, I will leave the conception of my personal appearance to the imagination of the reader. Thanks, however, to an elastic constitution, and a sound night's sleep, the ensuing morning found me comparatively fresh, and in good condition for the completion of my journey.

Thus ended my campaign in the woods. We were now within reach of the appliances of civilization, so that it was an easy

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matter to reach the nearest railroad station, and avail ourselves of steam locomotion. Despite the numerous vexations and petty hardships which necessarily attended my novitiate in backwoodsmanship, it was, on the whole, a pleasant episode in my life, and one upon which I look back with none but pleasurable emotions. And although I should not choose to establish my permanent residence in the woods, I can readily sympathize with the strong attachment to the forest which characterizes those hardy spirits who are "to the manor born."

My narrative has but little to do with trapping or even hunting, and may seem irrelevant in this book. But it relates at least to life in the woods: and to give any thing like a full view of that subject, it is important to show how such a life seems to the inexperienced. This book may induce many untried youth to enlist in the trapping service; and in mercy to them I would give them before hand some adequate conception of the realities before them, that they may not rush upon the mosquitoes and gnats and whiskey and panthers and long weary back-laden journies, wholly unprepared.

And after all the tribulations that I have recorded, I came out of the woods with such an appreciation of the discipline of forest life, that I cannot conclude without expressing the hope that the time will come when schools that prize the health and hardihood that come by gymnastics and military drill, will turn their attention to hunting and trapping as means of education; and instead of sending occasional detachments of school-boys in summer on mere aimless pedestrian journies, or into mock encampments, will annually organize regiments of stalwart youth for penetrating, even in winter, the savage regions far beyond the frontiers of civilization, and doing real service, as hunters and trappers of wild beasts—a service, in my opinion, as dignified and disciplinary, to say the least, as war.

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THE NEWHOUSE TRAP.

TESTIMONIALS.

[In order that we may faithfully finish our proposed task of *guiding* the trapper, it remains for us to show him where he can find THE VERY BEST TRAP. On this point we have taken pains to ask the opinion of many trappers and dealers in traps throughout the country; and have obtained the following responses, which seem to us to furnish an unexceptionable basis of sound conclusions: EDITOR.]

FROM TRAPPERS.

Manlius, N. Y., May 6, 1865.

I have been a trapper for fifty-five years, and during that time I have used nearly every kind of trap both of American and European manufacture; but have never seen any which will compare with the Newhouse trap. This is a very sure trap, and always takes the animal in just the right place. Some traps catch the animal too high up, and others not high enough; and in either case he is apt to get away. A great many of the traps in use will catch an animal and hold him so slightly that he will pull his leg out: but I never knew one of Newhouse's traps to spring on an animal without holding him, or some part of him.

I use the smallest size altogether for catching the fisher, and prefer them for that purpose. I have caught several otters, foxes, lynxes, one beaver, and one wolf in the small trap; and I use them exclusively for catching raccoons.

I can safely recommend the Newhouse trap to all trappers, as being altogether the best trap in the market, and, in fact, the only trap which is thoroughly reliable under all circumstances. JOHN HUTCHINS.

Yatton, Washington Co., Iowa, June 14, 1865.

I have used a number of different manufactures of traps, and hereby certify that the NEWHOUSE TRAP is decidedly the best trap that I have ever used, for strength, neatness and durability. GILES C. CARR.

Yatton, Iowa, June 13, 1865.

I think the NEWHOUSE TRAPS are the best now in use; at any rate, they are the best that I have ever seen. H. D. CARR.

Richfield Springs, Otsego Co., N. Y., May 8th, 1865.

S. NEWHOUSE, ESQ.: In regard to the Newhouse trap there is but one opinion about them. There is no other trap that will compare with them; this I have from every trapper of my acquaintance.

I have one hundred and fifty of them, of different sizes, and have never found any other to compare with them.

I am very respectfully, yours, A. TUNNICLIFF.

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FROM NEW-YORK CITY.

New York, April 13, 1865.

S. NEWHOUSE, ESQ., *Dear Sir:* We beg leave to offer you our tribute of regard, on behalf of those who will be benefited by your valuable experience and instructions in your forthcoming work on Trapping, as well as by being furnished with *the traps* of your own construction and manufacture, which, being so admirably adapted to the purposes intended, have gained that world-wide reputation which "Newhouse's Steel Trap" maintains over *all other makes.* Trusting that the *Trapper* particularly, will fully appreciate your good motives and efforts for *his* interest, as also many others not of the profession,

We are truly yours, CLARK, WILSON & CO.,
Wholesale Hardware Merchants.

New York, April 10, 1865.

MR. JOHN H. NOYES, *Oneida Community, Oneida, N. Y*

Dear Sir: The fact that the Newhouse Traps, manufactured by the Oneida Community, command much higher prices than any other, is sufficient evidence to us of their superior qualities. Many of our customers in sections where traps are used in large quantities, will purchase no other make: they say the trappers will have only the genuine "NEWHOUSE." The form, temper, and quality of material, peculiarly adapt them for the purpose intended. We have no doubt they are the best traps made.

Respectfully Yours, BLIVEN, MEAD, & CO.,
Manufacturers and Importers and Dealers in General Hardware, New York.

New York, April 8, 1865.

JOHN H. NOYES, ESQ., *Oneida Community, Oneida, N. Y.*

Dear Sir:—With regard to the quality of the NEWHOUSE TRAPS, they are so well known that commendation from us seems superfluous; we have sold them for several years, the demand constantly increasing, and we have never heard the first word of complaint against them. We believe them to be the best traps made. Very truly yours, SHELDON, HOYT, & CO.

New York, April 8, 1865.

ONEIDA COMMUNITY, *Oneida, N. Y., Gents*:—It is with pleasure that we give our opinion as to the excellence of the NEWHOUSE TRAP. Having sold them largely for the past five years, during which time we have distributed them throughout the West, and have heard none but the most favorable reports, we believe the NEWHOUSE TRAP to be the very best we have seen in *all respects,* and know of no point in which they can be improved.

It affords us great satisfaction to speak unqualifiedly in reference to articles of hardware, and we hope that all manufacturers who are watchful of their reputation will be remunerated as they deserve. Yours truly,

RUSSELL & ERWIN, MANUFACTURNG CO.

FROM BOSTON.

Boston, Mass., April 10*th*, 1865.

JOHN H. NOYES, *Dear Sir*:—It is with pleasure that we testify to the uniform good quality of the "Newhouse traps." For the past several years they have

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stood with us as *the best;* in fact our Western and North-Western customers would buy nothing else, unless *very much cheaper.* Knowing that you will continue to keep the quality good, we remain,

Yours truly, BENJ. CALLENDER & Co.

Boston, Mass., April 20th, 1865.

MR. JOHN H. NOYES, *Oneida Community:*

Sir:—We take pleasure in giving our testimony to the superior excellence of the "Newhouse Trap" manufactured by you. We have in former years imported large quantities of steel-traps made in England and on the Continent, and more recently have sold those made here by other parties; but we can safely say that no trap has given such entire satisfaction to our customers, or has commanded so large and so ready a sale as yours. Our own experience and the testimony of our customers confirm our opinion that yours is the best trap in the market for the "Trapper," and consequently for the Merchant.

Truly yours, SCUDDER, ROGERS & Co.,
Importers and Dealers in Hardware.

FROM CHICAGO, ILL.

Chicago, Ill., April 11, 1865.

TO THE ONEIDA COMMUNITY:

Gents: If any opinion of mine in regard to the superiority of your traps over all others will be of any service to you, allow me to say that I have been a dealer in animal traps for the past ten years and have no hesitation in adding my testimony to that of my customers that yours are the *ne plus ultra.*

Yours truly, GEO. T. ABBEY.

Chicago, Ill., April 11, 1865

MR. S. NEWHOUSE, *Dear Sir:* We have sold your traps for the past ten years, and consider them superior to any other trap made. Trappers in this section will use no other kind. Yours truly, BASSETT & HAMMOND.

Chicago, Ill., April 14, 1865.

MESSRS. ONEIDA COMMUNITY, *Oneida, N. Y.*

Gents: In regard to the Newhouse Trap, made by yourselves, we would say so far as our experience is concerned—which by the way extends over a period of some fifteen years or more, as we, or rather our predecessors in business originally introduced them for sale into this section of country—that from that time until the present we have not only found them the *very best* trap in the market, but the only kind we could sell. As our sales have been and are, either directly to the trappers, or to those who supply them, we have had excellent opportunities to learn their views in the matter. We find our opinion in regard to their superiority over others is fully corroborated by our trapping customers, who have repeatedly told us that the NEWHOUSE was the only trap yet made upon which they could place absolute dependence, or that would stand all the rough usage incident to a Trapper's Life. Yours truly,

LARRABEE & NORTH, *Hardware Merchants.*

P. S. If you wish anything different from the above; or additional testimony, as to the real, undoubted superiority of your traps over others in the market, write it out, send it here, and we will sign it, or endorse anything you can say *good* about them. L. &. N.

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FROM MILWAUKEE, WIS.

Milwaukee, Wis., April 12, 1865.

To THE ONEIDA COMMUNITY, *Oneida, N. Y.*

Gents: It affords me much pleasure to have an opportunity of testifying to your superior manufacture of the "Newhouse trap", which has given general satisfaction to all my customers; and wishing the intended publication of the "Trapper's Guide" all possible success, I remain,

Very respectfully, LEOPOLD NEUMANN.

Milwaukee, Wis., April. 11, 1865.

To THE ONEIDA COMMUNITY:

For several years past, we have had the pleasure of selling the Newhouse Traps. We have also sold many imitations of the same, and must frankly say no traps have given such general satisfaction, both to our customers and ourselves, as yours. This superiority consists in each and every trap being perfect; and all trappers that we have seen, say to us, that they can depend upon them every time. All we can say to you is, do not lower the standard quality of them, and they will take care of themselves.

Very truly yours, JOHN NAZRO & Co., *Hardware Merchants.*

Milwaukee, Wis., May, 1865

ONEIDA COMMUNITY:

We have sold your traps for ten years, almost exclusively; we have however kept for sale those of other make, but have never sold but very few. So well known has your trap become, that hardly a man, boy or any one else, catching animals by trapping, in our vicinity, but what will have the Newhouse Trap if possible to be found. Our means for being informed whether or not your traps are superior to all others, are quite extensive. We have been in the fur-purchase business at this point for over twenty years; we know almost every trapper in the state, and have endeavored to secure the most useful traps for trappers. A poor trap is unprofitable as well as cheaper in price. Not unfrequently does a trapper lose an animal from a poor trap, the skin of which is worth several traps. With your traps, such an instance is seldom, if ever known. We invariably warrant all of your traps not to break. Should perchance one prove defective, we cheerfully replace it by a new one. We cannot recommend your traps too highly.

Yours truly, A. H. GARDNER & Co., *Fur Dealers.*

FROM ST. PAUL, MINN.

St. Paul, Minn., April, 1865.

ONEIDA COMMUNITY, *Oneida, N. Y., Gents:*—We fully endorse all that has been or can be said in favor of the NEWHOUSE TRAP. We consider them unequaled. In fact, our customers, (to a large extent being Trappers or Fur-Traders), will have no others. Yours truly, CHERITREE & FARWELL.

St. Paul, Minn., April 13*th*, 1865.

We have sold the NEWHOUSE TRAP since 1859, to the Merchants and Trappers, and it has universally given entire satisfaction. Trappers inquire for the NEWHOUSE TRAP, and will buy no other; and as the result of our experience, we have no hesitation in pronouncing it in all respects the best trap in use.

Very truly yours, CHARLES E. MAYO & Co.

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FROM BUFFALO, N. Y.

Buffalo, N. Y. May 4th, 1865.

ONEIDA COMMUNITY:—Having sold your traps for several years, it affords us pleasure to say that we have always found them uniformly perfect in workmanship and material, and better adapted to the wants of trappers than any other we have ever seen offered to the trade.

Very truly yours, SIDNEY SHEPARD & Co., *Hardware Merchants.*

FROM CINCINNATI.

Cincinnati, April 20th, 1865.

ONEIDA COMMUNITY:—We take pleasure in adding our testimony as to the quality of the Newhouse Traps, which we have sold for some years throughout the North West. They have proved satisfactory in every case where we have introduced them, and our customers, in their second orders, very seldom fail to mention they wish the genuine Newhouse Trap, which is acknowledged by all as the favorite of the Trappers of the North-West.

Very respectfully your friends, R. W. BOOTH & Co.
Importers of Hardware.

FROM ST. LOUIS, MO.

St. Louis, April 12th, 1865.

JOHN H. NOYES, ESQ., *Oneida Community, Oneida, N. Y.*

Dear Sir:—We have sold the Newhouse Traps, as you are aware, for several years, and always to the entire satisfaction of the purchasers, most of whom bought them for their own trapping. In all cases they have been highly spoken of; and it is our opinion, judging from the very favorable testimony of all of our customers, and our own knowledge of the article, that they are superior to any other traps now in use.

Wishing you every success in your efforts to bring them into more extensive notice, we are Yours respectfully, N. F. SHAPLEIGH & Co.

FROM IOWA CITY.

Iowa City, April 20th, 1865.

S. NEWHOUSE ESQ., *Oneida, N. Y.*

Dear Sir:—I have been in the Fur and Trap trade for the last fifteen years, and experience has taught me that the Newhouse Steel-Trap is by far superior to any trap ever introduced into this Western country. In short, it is "*the trap*," and the *only trap* that I can sell to *old experienced trappers*, as they will have no other. Very truly yours, F. H. LUSE, *Fur Dealer.*

FROM SIOUX CITY, IOWA.

Sioux City, Iowa, April 18, 1865.

ONEIDA COMMUNITY, *Oneida, N. Y.*

Gents:—Concerning your traps, manufactured by Mr. S. Newhouse, I would say that they are the best, and consequently the most saleable, that I have ever had. I have dealt in traps for the last seven years, and kept a variety of them; but never, until I had yours five years ago, could I sell them in such quantities as now, and with such satisfaction to the buyers, the majority of whom are trappers. The principal advantages over most other traps are that the springs are tempered well, do not break in very cold water, and retain their strength. Yours respectfully, A. GRONINGER.

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FROM LA CROSSE, WIS.

La Crosse, May 1, 1865.

MR. JOHN H. NOYES:

Dear Sir: We have sold the Newhouse Traps for the past seven years and have found they give entire satisfaction to trappers. We believe them to be by far the best Trap in the market.

Respectfully yours, LLOYD & SUPPLEE.

FROM SUPERIOR, WIS.

Superior, April 24, 1865.

ONEIDA COMMUNITY, *Oneida, N. Y., Gentlemen:*—Having dealt largely in Steel-Traps of different makers, we now purchase none but your make, for the reason that we find yours *the best* in market.

Yours respectfully, PETER E. BRADSHAW & Co.
Dealers in Furs and Indian Goods.

FROM NILES, MICH.

Niles, April 21, 1865.

ONEIDA COMMUNITY:—I used to keep several kinds of traps for sale, but I have found that every one of the regular trappers give the Newhouse Trap the preference. And for three years past, I have not had an inquiry for any other.

Yours truly, J. S. TUTTLE.

FROM UNADILLA FORKS, N. Y.

Unadilla Forks, April 11, 1865.

ONEIDA COMMUNITY, *Oneida, N. Y.*

Dear Sirs:—I am pleased to say, that the Newhouse Traps are the best traps that I ever saw. Also that my customers think that their equals cannot be found. Respectfully yours, O. S. HOPKINS.

P. S. If you wish to add any thing to the above in regard to my opinion of the traps, you are at liberty to do so, as I think they cannot be too highly recommended.

FROM FULTON, N. Y.

Fulton, April 17, 1865.

ONEIDA COMMUNITY:

Gentlemen:—I hardly know what to say in regard to the Newhouse Trap. It almost speaks for itself. Its friends are plenty, and my experience among the trappers shows they all like them very much, and will use no others. The greatest fault the Trappers find with them is, they catch and hold all the game, so that they leave nothing for seed.

I have dealt in Traps for seven years, and all my trappers want nothing but the Newhouse Trap. They say it is sure, and never fails to spring upon and hold the game until relieved. A number of my trappers say if they had only had the Newhouse Trap when they first commenced trapping, they would have been rich. They give the best satisfaction. Yours truly, H. S. GARDNER.

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FROM CANADA.

Montreal, Ap'l 11th, 1865.

ONEIDA COMMUNITY:

Gents:—We beg to say that the Newhouse trap is the best article we ever had for trapping, and our customers prefer the traps of the Oneida Community to any other make. Yours respectfully, W. DARLING & Co.

Toronto, April 22, 1865.

THE ONEIDA COMMUNITY:

Gents:—We have pleasure in bearing testimony to the good qualities of Mr. Newhouse's trap. All the reports we have received speak of them in the highest terms, and we have no doubt your sales will be greatly augmented.

Yours respectfully, THOMSON & BURNS.
Importers and General Merchants.

Toronto, April 12th, 1865.

THE ONEIDA COMMUNITY:

Gents:—Since we have been acquainted with the Newhouse Trap we have felt warranted in bearing testimony to the superior qualities thereof. Those accustomed to use the Newhouse Trap have always represented them to us as the best they had been able to find. Our customers generally have preferred them to any other, and Indians who have bought them of us, ask for them again, and will take no other.

We are, gentlemen, your obedient servants, RIDOUT, BROTHERS & Co.

Ottawa, Canada West, April 21st, 1865.

THE ONEIDA COMMUNITY, *Oneida, N. Y.*

Gents:—It affords us great pleasure to bear testimony to the superior quality of the Newhouse Trap, manufactured at your establishment. We have sold them extensively since the year 1857, during which time we have not had a single complaint from any of our customers, and can reccomend them as superior to any trap we have yet seen.

Your obedient servants, WORKMAN & GRIFFIN.

Peterborough, Canada West, April 11, 1865.

TO THE ONEIDA COMMUNITY, *Gentlemen:*—Having been engaged in the Fur trade now upwards of twenty-five years, and during that period having dealt in almost all kinds of animal Traps manufactured in England, Canada and the United States, I have much pleasure in testifying to the very great superiority of the Newhouse Trap over all other traps that I have seen, for the purpose of taking the various kinds of fur-bearing animals. Indeed, so *sure* are these traps to *catch*, that wherever they are used extensively there is great danger of the fur-bearing animals becoming extinct. Formerly, and before the introduction of the Newhouse Traps, these animals had some chance of escape; but now the "gates of mercy" seem to be shut on them forever.

The fame of the Newhouse Trap is so wide-spread and its quality and excellence so generally admitted among trappers everywhere, that it seems almost superfluous to say anything in its favor; but when it it necessary to do so, the testimonials of hundreds of trappers who have used it could be easily obtained. I remain, gentlemen,

Yours respectfully, WILLIAM EASTLAND, *Fur Dealer.*

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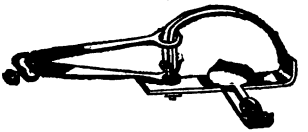
DESCRIPTION OF THE NEWHOUSE TRAP.

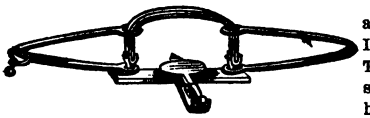
THERE are eight different sizes of the Newhouse Trap, adapted to the capture of all kinds of animals, from the house-rat to the grizzly bear.

The smallest size having but recently been introduced into the series, is designated as No. 0, and is called the RAT TRAP. It has a single spring, and the jaws spread, when set, three inches and a half. It is designed for the house-rat, but is strong enough to hold the muskrat.

No. 1 is called the MUSKRAT TRAP. It has one spring, and the jaws spread four inches. It is adapted to the capture of the mink, marten, and all the smaller fur-bearing animals. John Hutchins refers to this when he says:—"I use the smallest size altogether for catching the fisher, and prefer them for that purpose. I have caught several otters, foxes, lynxes, one beaver, and one wolf in the small trap; and I use them exclusively for catching raccoons."

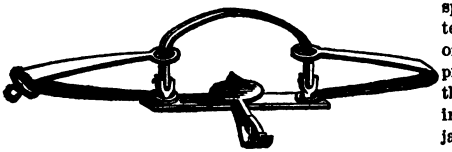


No 1½, (also recently introduced), is called the MINK TRAP. It has but one spring; and the jaws spread four inches and seven eighths. It is strong enough for the Fox or Fisher.

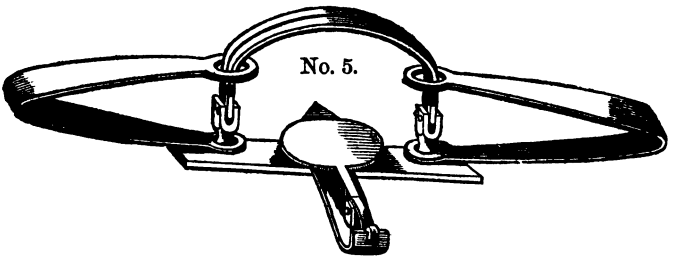


No. 2 is called the FOX TRAP. It has two springs, and the jaws spread four inches and seven-eighths. It is strong enough for the fisher or even the otter. Trappers sometimes have ordered this size with single instead of double springs. No. 1½ will hereafter meet such demands.

No. 3 is called the OTTER TRAP. The jaws spread five inches and a half. It will hold any of the medium sized animals, such as the beaver, the badger, the raccoon, the opossum, and the wildcat.



No 4 is called the BEAVER TRAP. The jaws spread six inches and a half. It is adapted to the wolf or the lynx. Extra sets of jaws with teeth constructed expressly for taking deer, are made to fit this trap, and can be had separately, or inserted in the place of the ordinary jaws, as may be desired.



No. 5.

No 5 is called the SMALL BEAR TRAP. The jaws spread eleven inches and three-fourths. The weight of each spring is two pounds and ten ounces, and the weight of the whole trap is seventeen pounds. It is adapted to the common black bear, the panther, and most of the large animals found this side of the Rocky Mountains.

All these traps are furnished with swivels, and if desired, with chains.

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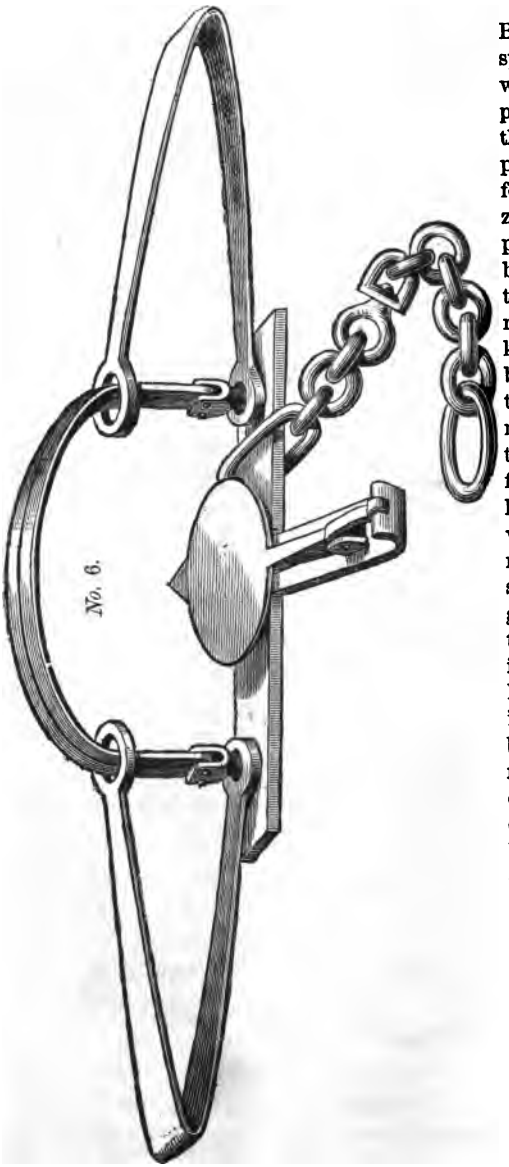
THE GREAT BEAR TAMER!



No 6 is called the GREAT BEAR TRAP. The jaws spread sixteen inches. The weight of each spring is six pounds. The weight of the trap with chain is forty pounds. This is the trap for the moose and the grizzly bear. Its tremendous power of taming wild beasts, is already known in the mountains of California; but it ought to be known, and we trust it will be, ere long, in all parts of the world. Its use need not be confined to the capture of animals for their furs. In the interest of civilization, it ought to go wherever ferocious animals exclude man from the soil. India in all her jungles needs it to exterminate the tiger. Africa needs it in her long battle with the lion. South America needs it for grappling with the boa constrictor. There is not an animal living that can defy it, unless it is the elephant, whose foot may be too large for it; and even the elephant, taken by the trunk, would have to succumb. It is safer, and far more sure and effectual than fire-arms in encounters with any of these monsters; and ought to be put in the very front of the battle of man against the savages of the forest and the desert.

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HISTORY OF THE NEWHOUSE TRAP.

BY G. W. NOYES.

MOUNT with me, friendly reader, the hippogriff of imagination for a trip towards the sunset. Away we speed, by the bustling towns and cities of the West, by the gulfward-rolling Mississippi, by the fertile prairies of Iowa and the plains of Nebraska, by the fringe of squatter settlements that bound civilization in that direction, and by the final hunter's cabin that projects, a faint landmark of repose, into the encircling wilderness. On again, five-hundred miles further—we are now among the buffaloes; and yet another five hundred in a northwesterly direction places us somewhere in the region of the head-waters of three, or perhaps, four, great river systems, those of the Missouri, the Columbia, the Saskatchawan and Mackenzie's River, having their several outlets in the Gulf of Mexico, the Pacific Ocean, the North Atlantic, and the Polar Sea. A wild and solitary place. On one side, snow-capped mountains rise in desolate grandeur to a hight of 15,000 feet. Dark forests belt the landscape, where streams, issuing from deep gorges in the hills, break to the level of the plains below. Follow this rocky *canon* to where its stream and bed widen into a marsh. We are now among the haunts of the beaver, otter and mink. We deem ourselves the only human visitants of this remote place. But look! a moccasin track in the sand tells us that some one has been here before us. Its course is toward the margin of yonder sluggish pool; and as we yet trace the steps with our eye, click! a clash of steel and the heavy plunge of an animal in the water, struggling between iron jaws at the end of an iron chain, tell at once the story of the Rocky-Mountain Trapper and his game.

If not tired with this jaunt, allow a year to pass, and then, on the same handy roadster as before, fly with me a similar journey in the opposite direction. We alight at one of the great European capitals; let it be London. It is night; the glitter of gas and glass around us, the whirl of fashion and the roar of trade, with

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the miles of crowded pavement that stretch away on every side, almost obliterate the conception of such a thing as rural nature, to say nothing of primitive forest solitude. Here in the aristocratic West End, a mansion door opens; a lady, robed and protected *a la mode* (for the night is cool), and attended by powdered footmen, advances, enters a coroneted carriage and rolls off to opera or court.

Do you see any connection between these two incidents of antipodal real life? None is obvious, certainly; yet on noting the lady's costume a tie of association is at once established; for that London dame this moment presses against her delicate cheek the *fur* of the animal whose death-plunge we heard in the mountain stream of the Northwest. Thus between my lady, the Duchess, and the Oregonian trapper, between the Saskatchawan and the Strand, there is a chain of relations of which the middle link, both locally and causatively, is the Oneida Community Trap-Shop. If you had examined the trap whose snap was fatal to the mink on our first flight, and whose spoils you saw adorning European loveliness in our second, you would probably have found stamped on its steel-spring the words, "S. Newhouse, Oneida Community, N, Y."

The extraordinary growth of Trapping as an occupation within the last ten years, stimulated in part by the remunerative price of furs, and in part by the ever extending arc of frontier settlements at the West, but still more perhaps by the improvement in the manufacture of Traps made by the Community, under the supervision of its chief in that department, Mr. Sewell Newhouse, will justify us in giving a sketch of the history of the Trap business and of its founder.

Mr. Newhouse is a native of Brattleboro, Vt. His paternal grandfather was an English soldier, who, having been taken prisoner by the Americans at the battle of Bunker Hill, afterwards adopted this country as his home. From Brattleboro, the parents of Mr. Newhouse removed during his infancy to Colerain, Mass., and in 1820, when he was fourteen years old, the family emigrated to Oneida County, N. Y. This central part of the State of New York, if not then an actually new country, retained some of the features of a frontier settlement. The Erie Canal, though it was building, was not finished till several years later; and travel was mainly accomplished by means of stage-coaches, which at

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some seasons plowed their toilsome way through seas of mud. The large kinds of game, as deer, bears and wolves, were not extinct in the great forest basin of Oneida Lake. Fur-bearing animals and salmon abounded in the streams; and a remnant of the Iroquois Indians, several thousand in number, inhabiting reserved lands in this and the neighbouring counties, with their bow-and-arrow proclivities gave a somewhat primitive cast to the population.

With a stout constitution and a taste for field sports, drawn perhaps from his English forefathers, Mr. Newhouse found his youth not inaptly placed in such a region. While making the usual school attainments in education, and rendering his share of assistance on the family farm, he also became known as a successful woodsman, wise in the ways of all sorts of game, from wild geese to honey-bees, and from bull-pouts to bears. The instinct of a successful hunter or trapper amounts almost to a sixth sense; and this inevitable tracking faculty which enables one man to detect the signs of game and to seize the strategic point for its capture, which to another are quite unintelligible, was strong in young Newhouse. It is unsafe for a pigeon to alight, or for a muskrat to make an audible plunge within three miles of such a boy. Vulpine cunning may suffice to elude the common range of observation, but it is no match for the awakened sharpness of the practised woodsman.

The need of a trapper in a new country is not piano-fortes, or cartes de visite, but *traps.* At seventeen Mr. Newhouse felt this need, and in the absence of other means of obtaining a supply, he set to work to make them. The iron parts of fifty or more were somewhat rudely fashioned in a blacksmith's shop, and for the steel springs the worn-out blades of old axes were made to serve as material. A mechanic of chance acquaintance showed the young artisan how to temper the springs. The traps thus extemporized proved on the whole a success; for they would catch, and what they caught they held. After the season's use, they were sold to neighboring Indians for sixty-two cents apiece, and the making of a new supply was entered upon. These in turn were sold and replaced, and thus the manufacture of "Newhouse Traps" was launched.

During the next twenty years Mr. Newhouse worked at trap-

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making, sometimes alone and sometimes with a partner or with hired help. The extent of his manufacture was from one to two thousand traps per year, which supplied the local demand, and procured for him a reputation for skill in what ever pertained to wood-craft. During this period he also engaged to some extent in rifle-making; and his amateur productions in this line, being noted for their shooting qualities, were considerably sought after. The working-season was generally varied by a trapping excursion to the "Brown Tract" or to Oneida lake, which improved his practical insight into the details of trapology, and also gave the slightly woody flavor to the man, that is observable in his taste and ways. At certain seasons he is still subject to a periodical perturbation, tending towards the North Woods, which though now but seldom indulged, is a sure sign that he has some time been a liege follower of one of the three ancient Rods.

There are allusions made by the neighbors to feats of strength in wrestling, running, &c., formerly performed by Mr. Newhouse. Such is the traditional anecdote of a thorough taming given by him to one or two big Indians who in a state of drunken pugnacity forced a quarrel upon him in the street. But not having verified these stories, and Mr. Newhouse being himself reticent on such subjects, they may better be left to the keeping of that hazy kind of romance, which time gathers about the exploits of the Robin Hoods, Davy Crocketts, and other backwwoodsmen of history. We may say that while clearly the possessor of much muscular power and dexterity, to be used in an emergency, Mr. Newhouse is a man of gentle disposition, and is regarded by the remaining red men of his vicinity, as their true friend.

Mr. Newhouse having married Miss E. Hyde of Oneida Castle, and fixed his residence there, was at one time a member of the Presbyterian church; but in 1835 he came into the advanced views of the Perfectionists. That with the religious sincerity of these people there was mingled in some of them a degree of questionable zeal, as well as of caustic humor, few will now deny. It is related that at a meeting in which the minister was setting forth the unhappy condition of the wicked in the next world, he proceeded in the tone of clerical sing-song that is habitual with some preachers: "There'll be *no-o-o* sabbaths there; and there'll be *no-o-o* churches there; and there'll be *no-o-o* ministers there;—"

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"Yes, there *will-l-l!*" broke from Mr. Newhouse, who was present as an auditor. We have not heard what was the effect of this interlocution, but can imagine that among some of the laity it may have provoked a smile.

On another occasion, a pious lady with whom he was talking, expressed concern at his willingness to exalt the living inspiration of the Spirit, as she thought, above the Bible. "You expect," said Mr. Newhouse, "that the world and every thing in it is to be destroyed, do you not?" "Yes." "As the Bible must go with the rest, what will you do then?" This was putting the case in a new way, and after a moment's thought she could only answer, "I don't know what I should do if the Bible were lost; what would you do?" "Write another!" said Mr. N.;—a reply which, though somewhat startling to his questioner, will be seen to have been the only one which a consistent believer in inspiration could make.

The characteristics which Mr. Newhouse possesses as a mechanic, are, a critical eye, sound judgment of material relations, nicety of hand, and a conscientious attention to the *minutiæ* of any mechanism, on which so often its proper working depends. As a trap-maker his original idea was to make faultless traps, and nothing could swerve him from this point. His solicitude has been that they should catch game, whether they caught custom or not. The reputation which has come to him on this basis, has made it seem desirable to other manufacturers, in some instances, to pirate his name to give currency to their imitations of the "Newhouse Traps." But this quality of particularity, so valuable in the pursuit of excellence, if not combined with other talents does not always lead to great business success; and the Oneida trap-maker would perhaps have scarcely risen above a local celebrity, but for the introduction of him and his business to a new element of energy and enterprise in the Oneida Community.

THE COMMUNITY "NEWHOUSE TRAP."

The Community established itself at Oneida, about two miles from the residence of Mr. Newhouse, in 1848, and the next summer he and his family entered it as members. For several years after this but little attention was paid to the trap business. A few dozens were made occasionally by Mr. Newhouse in the old way,

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but it was not until 1855, under a call for traps from Chicago and New-York, that practical interest was first directed to this branch of manufacture, with a view to its extension, by Mr. J. H. Noyes. Arrangements were then made for carrying on the business in a shop 15 feet by 25. The tools consisted of a common forge and bellows, hand-punch, swaging-mold, anvil, hammer, and file. The shop so established employed about three hands. The next year it was removed to a larger room in a building connected with water-power, and the number of hands was increased. Among them were Leonard F. Dunn, George W. Hamilton, and several other young machinists, who, together with Messrs. Noyes and Newhouse exercised their inventive powers in devising mechanical appliances to take the place of hand-labor in fashioning the different parts of the trap. A power-punch was the first machine introduced, then a rolling apparatus for swaging the jaws. Soon it was found that malleable cast-iron could be used as a substitute for wrought-iron, in several parts of the traps. The brunt of labor expended had always been in the fabrication of the steel spring, and this was still executed with hammer and anvil wholly by hand. Two stalwart men, with a two-hand sledge and a heavy hammer reduced the steel to its elementary shape by about 120 blows, and it was afterward finished by a long series of lighter manipulations. The attempt was made to bring this part of the work within the grasp of machinery. One by one the difficulties in the way were overcome by the ingenuity of our machinists, until at length the whole process of forming the spring, from its condition as a steel bar to that of the bent, bowed, tempered and elastic article, ready for use, is now executed by machinery almost without the blow of a hammer. The addition of chain-making (also executed mostly by machine power), makes the manufacture of traps and their attachments complete.

The statistics of the business thus extended are in part as follows: Eight sizes of Traps are made, for the different grades of animals from the house-rat to the bear, which have to a great extent superseded the use and importation of foreign traps in this country and Canada. The number of these made at the Community works during the last seven years is over half a million. The number of hands employed directly has been in the busiest seasons about sixty, besides twenty-five or thirty who

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for traps. The amount of American iron and steel used is over 300,000 lbs. annually.

We may add that to complete their arrangements for carrying on this business to the fullest extent of the possible demand for traps, the Community have built recently a new manufacturing establishment on a water-power about a mile from their former works, which will enable them to more than duplicate their production.

With the progress of improvement in their process of manufacture, the cost and price of traps have correspondingly diminished, so that now the western pioneer or farmer's boy can equip himself with an outfit of traps of far better quality than the weak and clumsy articles in former use, and at much less price. The influence of these little utensils, now so widely used, on the progress of settlement, civilization and comfort, will occur to every observer. The first invaders of the wilderness must have other resources for immediate support than are offered by the cultivation of the soil. These are present in the valuable peltries of fur-bearing animals which are the occupants of the soil in advance of man. Hence the trap for securing them, going before the ax and the plow, forms the prow with which iron-clad civilization is pushing back barbaric solitude, causing the bear and beaver to give place to the wheat-field, the library, and the piano. Wisconsin might, not inappropriately, adopt the steel-trap into her coat-of-arms; and those other rising empires of the West, Kansas, Colorado, Nevada, and golden Idaho, have been in their germ and infancy suckled, not like juvenile Rome by a wolf, but by what future story will call the noted wolf-catcher of their times —the Oneida Community "Newhouse Trap."

NOTE FROM MR. NEWHOUSE.

To the Editor: Not having been present at the printing of the sheets containing my treatise, I ask room for a few corrections at the end of the book. On the 10th page the end of the trapping season is put at the first of April. It should be the first of May, as the month of April is often one of the best. On page 81 it is twice mentioned that the sliding-pole, in taking beaver, must be *dry*. This is necessary only when the pole is to be used under the ice. On page 88, a few lines from the top, occurs the phrase *piston-furniture*, which should be *pistol-furniture*.—On page 46, about the middle, for *Lilliputian Muntjoe* read *Lilliputian Muntjac*. The camp hatchet spoken of at the bottom of page 55 as weighing three or four pounds, should not weigh more than ten ounces. More mistakes might probably be found by close inspection, but they must be allowed to pass till the next edition. S. N.

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